

Understanding the Integration of Living Skills Through the Context of Health and
Physical Education: A Case Study of Educators' Experiences

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Abstract

The research presented is a qualitative case study of educators' experiences in integrating living skills in the context of health and physical education (HPE). In using semi-structured interviews the study investigated HPE educators' experiences and revealed their insights relative to three major themes; professional practice, challenges and support systems. Professional practice experiences detailed the use of progressive lesson planning, reflective and engaging activities, explicit student centered pedagogy as well as holistic teaching philosophies. Even further, the limited knowledge and awareness of living skills, conflicting teaching philosophies, competitive environments between subject areas and lack of time and accessibility were four major challenges that emerged throughout the data. Major supportive roles for HPE educators in the integration process included other educators, consultants, school administration, public health, parents, community programs and professional organizations. The study provides valuable discussion and suggestions for improvement of pedagogical practices in teaching living skills in the HPE setting.

Keywords: living skills, physical education, integration, curriculum implementation

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But when I believe I can, then I acquire the ability to do it even if I didn't have it in the beginning.”-Ghandi

No matter what believe in yourself, believe that you can accomplish great things and most importantly believe in your research even if others would say otherwise!

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Personal Background

As I begin to explain in detail where my research has led me, I believe it is important to highlight myself as the researcher and how I came to be involved in an area such as Health and Physical Education (HPE). My passion and interest for HPE began long ago when I was a just a young girl. In these years as a young teenager I spent my adolescence combatting an assortment of challenges such as bullying, depression and low self-esteem. As a result, I found my life at times wandering and veering out of control in negative directions. It was my experiences and my involvement with HPE and extracurricular sport that really motivated me to be resilient through these times and led me towards better choices. Through experiencing this I knew I wanted to dedicate myself to a profession that would give me the opportunity to do the exact same thing for students that had happened to me. As such, I made a choice to pursue and complete my education in teaching and physical education at Brock University in hopes that I would be a teacher. It was throughout these studies that I have been involved extensively in developing my skills as a teacher as well as my own pedagogy related to health and physical education.

Although I have had many experiences, too many to share, one I can say has been a foundation to my interest and inquiries into this research specifically devoted to living skills. This was my involvement in an experiential learning course offered in 2010 by the Faculty of Kinesiology called “International Perspectives on Development through Sport, Health, and Physical Education.” In this course I had the opportunity to have a two-week international experience in El Salvador working with a local university and various

organizations. Through delivering workshops to teachers and facilitating physical activities with children, I had the opportunity to be a part of the country's focus on building strong HPE teachers as well as providing quality physical education that focused on life skills teaching. In doing this, the objective was to reduce the continual issue of violence especially amongst youth in their communities.

Each and everyday I saw this vision come to life as I helped lead children in activities, seeing them make connections between lesson learned in HPE to what was happening in their lives at home. This was my first real opportunity to see the impact that living skills could have in the development of children and youth throughout a community. Each and everyday I witnessed the enthusiasm and dedication that both university students and teachers had for HPE and its role to solve social issues and challenges of violence. As I met more and more people on my trip and travelled to different schools, many shared their gratitude and need for such programs and how they had significantly changed the futures of children that had the chance to participate in them. Despite being separated by differences in culture, language and ethnicity, there were moments where I saw many similarities to the issues that our own communities were facing back in Canada. In seeing these commonalities I was intrigued to find ways that living skills were being integrated in HPE as well as seeing their impact on students in my own community.

Over the next few years, I was in many classrooms as I began the final part of my journey in becoming a teacher. It was throughout that time that I realized that the knowledge and practice of life skills teaching that was so central in impacting the children and youth on my trip were not really being highlighted in the teaching practices

of those I was working with back home. I remember initially having a sense of frustration with this and started to wonder why living skills were not being integrated in the same ways that I had seen as well as why many did not yet know anything about it despite its presence in the curriculum. However, much of this frustration turned into motivation and intrigue. In sharing my perspectives and knowledge related to what I had learned and what I had seen on my trip, many colleagues were interested and began to share their own experiences and insights. I became very interested in discovering what experiences they had in the HPE environment and how this directly related to teaching living skills. I then knew that I wanted to pursue research and find out for myself what not only my colleagues were experiencing, but what other educators across the province were experiencing as well.

New Curriculum Implementation

It was in 2010 the Ontario Ministry of Education released a revised Health and Physical Education (H&PE) Curriculum to replace the existing one used by physical educators across the province. The new curriculum is considered to be one of the most significant advancements in health and education, with its future impact to improve health and learning for over 2.1 million children and youth (Ontario Physical Health Education Association, 2011). The advancement of this document has been widely recognized because of its vision and goal, not only to lead students to gain the comprehension and commitment to follow and promote healthy active lives, but to develop essential living skills. This promotes the development of a positive sense of self, the maintenance of healthy relationships, the effective communication with others, and the use of critical and creative thinking as they set goals and make decisions (Ontario

Ministry of Education, 2010). With a living skills approach in the new curriculum, children have the opportunity to learn life skills that promote the ability for adaptive and positive behavior, enabling them to deal effectively with the demands and challenges in their lives (World Health Organization, 2001).

However, despite the in-depth knowledge, level of expertise and consideration for student development, even a well-designed curriculum must be implemented if it is to have an impact on students (Fullan & Stommel, 1977). A major concern in education is implementation. As Marsh (2009) notes, implementation is a critical phase and incorporates an attitudinal element that places the teacher at the forefront of delivery. The term “implementation” refers to “the actual use of an innovation or what an innovation consists of in practice” (Fullan & Stommel, 1977, p. 336). Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) make it known that not all teachers accept new curriculum and feel that they should use it with their students. Commitment from teachers depends greatly on their capacity and will to implement it (Spillane, 1999). It is clear that careful planning and development of any curriculum is important, but it is meaningless unless teachers make it a reality in their classrooms, with their students and in their practice (Marsh, 2009).

Rationale

It is important to identify why there is a need for this research and its importance significance to the research and professional community. Holt (2009) identified that living skills need to be taught intentionally and that participation in sport itself does not guarantee learning. Similar to this, the impact on learning these desired competencies is also effective when teacher pedagogy, how they teach those living skills, is considered

and applied appropriately (Coalter, 2007). In understanding the evidence above, the role of the teacher is at the forefront of integrating living skills and has a critical part to play in their learning based on their professional practice and experience. In considering the position teachers have, the need to further explore the area of living skills amongst schools is presented in the recent study concerning the implementation and support for the newly revised H&PE curriculum in Ontario. Findings of a recent study found that teacher respondents, in reflection of the new curriculum, rated their knowledge capacity significantly lower in the strand of living skills in comparison to other strands (Manske & Nowaczek, 2011). In considering this with the evidence above, it is important to understand the current experiences of not just teachers, but also expand this to all educators involved in HPE to better support them in achieving success in their teaching practices and to give them the necessary tools needed to do so. Further objectives will be to gain descriptive detail and experiences that will highlight the importance and impact of living skills as well as create further discussions amongst professionals from all levels of education on how to be more effective in it's integration.

Research Questions

In conducting the study, the following questions will be addressed:

- 1) What are the experiences of educators in integrating living skills expectations from the new 2010 Health & Physical Education curriculum?
- 2) How do different groups within the education system experience and take a role in the integration of living skills?
- 3) What is the purpose and presence of living skills within the Ontario elementary curriculum for today's youth?

In answering these questions I will try to gain of deeper understanding of this process and create discussion on how we can support teachers in successfully implementing living skills learning through the health and physical education setting.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter presents an outline of the literature discussing the scholarly research in concerns with living skills and its link to teaching and implementation through physical education, sport and activity setting. It begins with presenting the various terminologies that are used to describe exactly what living skills are and how similarities are present between their meanings. A description of the Ontario Health and Physical Education Curriculum is described and focuses on presenting an overview of the living skills that are embedded within it. The role of sport and physical activity in teaching living skills such as those in the Ontario curriculum is presented through research of similar sport and physical activity programs. Research concerning the role of teachers, their attitudes and perceptions, and understanding of the transfer and learning of life skills are discuss and highlight their importance in successful implementation. Future directions conclude by outlining further research in this area.

Defining Living Skills and Its Importance

In order to understand how to achieve living skills in youth, we need to first understand what living skills are and explore its various terms and definitions. Living skills is a term that is commonly discussed, but its definition is rarely stated. Determining what it consists of could refer to balancing a checkbook for one person or could be making decisions in regards to personal health (Danish, 2002). Gould and Carson (2008) identified the problem that challenges researchers in that life skills encompasses other similar terms and is not precisely defined. Such terms are used interchangeably and are seen throughout literature as socio-emotional growth, positive youth development, living skills and life skills development.

Living skills is the term that directly relates to the focus of this study and its implementation in the Ontario Health and Physical Education Curriculum. Living skills are defined as a part of this curriculum as building a sense of resiliency that will allow students to develop a sense of self, practice communication skills, build positive relationships and engage in setting goals, problem solving and decision making (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). In introducing living skills into the curriculum, education systems have recognized that living skills are important to the dimension of healthy development and with its application can lead to other achievements such as responsible adults capable of leading long, healthy and active lives.

Although living skills is the term used throughout this curriculum document other terms have been used in other literature pertaining to physical education, activity and sport settings that support similar objectives. One of these terms is “positive youth development” (PYD). This focuses on the “promotion of any number of desirable competencies or outcomes in young people” (Gould & Carson, 2008, p. 59) Examples highlight that competencies are not limited to one specific area and may include a variety of skills including interpersonal, decision-making and coping skills; all of which can help an individual resist pressure to engage in high risky behavior (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1995a). In a sport setting this may include the development of positive healthy behaviors, physical fitness levels, psychological well-being and specific skills (Gould & Carson, 2008). In considering this term, the role of such development is recognized as an essential component in order for a young person to make the transitions into adulthood (Jones, 2005). This presents a larger notion of what PYD is and illustrates

the variety of competencies youth can develop for their lives both in the present and future.

Another term such as “life skills” is one that is used interchangeably. This term was explored by The Life Skills Center located at Virginia Commonwealth University. Steve Danish, an advocate for life skills development in young people, has provided insight and scholarly research to understanding what life skills are and the general principles we should understand about children learning them. Danish (2002) has defined life skills as those skills that enable us to succeed in the environments in which we live. These can be behavioural (communicating effectively with peers and adults), cognitive (making effective decisions), interpersonal, and/or intrapersonal. Such definitions have a significant place in understanding what living skills are and how they are represented in the form of different vocabulary in similar settings to that of the physical education classroom. For the purpose of this study, living skills will be the terminology used, however, when addressing and discussing other literature relevant to the study other vocabulary such as those described above will be referenced.

Even though living skills are highlighted using different terms and within different contexts it still shares a commonality in its importance to today’s youth. In the following excerpt, Danish (1997) shares at the time the current and augmenting problems faced by youth.

“Adolescents are taking more risks with their health, their lives, and their future than ever before. The number of illegitimate births to teenage girls has risen by more than half since 1980, marijuana use among eighth graders has doubled in just the past three years; arrests of young people for murder and manslaughter has gone

up 60% since 1980; and a drop out rate in some of our city schools approached 50%” (p. 291).

He further emphasizes that the consequences of this will not only effect the present, but will indeed persist into the future without intervention and prevention.

The time period during childhood and adolescence is a critical one in which learning of values and life skills is needed to build a foundation into adult life (McCallister, Blinde, & Weiss, 2000). The Carnegie Corporation of New York (1995b) identified that at least one quarter of adolescence are at a high risk of engaging in dangerous behavior that can have detrimental effects to their overall development for the long-term. In this respect they shared that “Given the complex influences on adolescents, the essential requirements for ensuring healthy development must be met through the joint efforts of a set of pivotal institutions that powerfully shape adolescents' experiences.” (p.2). The importance of living skills, especially carried out with a pivotal institutions such as the schools and their corresponding programs such as the physical education classroom, has a major role in order to encourage future youth have the tools necessary to face life challenges. The topic of living skills is clearly one that needs to be examined as it has much significance to youth's lives then we once may have thought.

Living Skills Expectations: The Ontario Healthy and Physical Education Curriculum

It is important when conducting research in the area of life skills to consider which ones need to be included and considered. There has been research emerging related to the needs of children and youth in order to achieve appropriate development for

success within their lives. In considering the sport context Kleiber and Roberts (1981) emphasized that life skills programs give young athletes the knowledge and skills needed for coping with the “complex realities of life” (p.253) thereby highlighting the necessity of life skills in order to face and deal with challenging circumstances. Even further, McCallister, Blinde, and Weiss (2000) discussed their rationale for conducting a study with coaches of high school sport teams, identifying that both “childhood and adolescence are critical periods for the learning of socially appropriate values and life skills that provide the foundation for adulthood” (p.35). This critical time reflects the need to understand and closely monitor how participation in sport by youth can address their social, emotional and physical needs.

This curriculum is one that addresses the learning of living skills throughout a critical time period in the development of youth. Here I will present a detailed description of the living skills expectations that are included in the newly revised curriculum. The living skills expectation across grade levels are the same, but will vary in terms of how they are applied relative to the development level of the grade. Currently, only the revised elementary HPE curriculum includes living skills expectations. Each area of learning: personal skills, interpersonal skills, and critical and creative thinking skills, each have their own overall expectation with three groups of related expectations. A detailed outline of these related expectations are provided in Appendix A. The Ontario Ministry of Education (2010) provides a detailed reference for teachers to understand the three areas of living skills and what this might look like in terms of their students learning. Personal skills are described as those that help students have a greater understanding of who they are and their physical capabilities. Along side this students develop a self-awareness of

their abilities, goals, strengths and actions including adopting adaptive, coping and management skills that help students to build resiliency and overcome challenges. The second category includes developing interpersonal skills such as communication and relationships that promote positive interaction and collaboration between students. The final category is critical and creative thinking which focuses on getting students to engage in planning, processing and presenting in order to make informed decisions and reflect on further steps. All categories are embedded into other strands throughout the curriculum in order to present students with the opportunities to develop these living skills as they achieve other expectations.

The Role of Sport and Physical Activity in Life Skills

In the early twentieth century, sport was seen as a training ground that would serve as a way for children and youth to learn values and skills that would help them prepare for the rest of their lives (Danish & Nellen, 1997). Plato (as cited in Cubberly, 1920) expressed that “the moral value of exercises and sports far outweigh the physical value” (p.46). Such statements reflect the possible role that sport and physical activity has in life skills development that is focused on psychosocial development rather than just physical development.

With this importance, there has been growing interest in this field of research to explore whether life skills can be gained from participating in sports and physical activity as well as the dimensions that might influence this process. In a study looking at the effectiveness of teaching a life skills program in a sport context, Papacharisis, Goudas, Danish, and Theodorakis (2005) found that athletes who participate in a life skills programs can both improve their sport skills and at the same time learn life skills that can

provide them with an increased chance of becoming better students, athletes and members of their communities. This reflected how a sport context might help people learn valuable life skills and how others perceive their experiences within it. In a study by Holt, Tamminen, Tink, and Black (2009) they explored how people might learn life skills with regular participation in competitive programs. They found that key experiences provided by participants were the social interactions they had with peers and parents and the way coaches placed an emphasis on teamwork in order to reinforce values relating to sportsmanship. Service learning programs in a study by Cutforth and Puckett (1999) provided young people with needed life skills through community projects. They used physical activity settings, as they were practical due to their capability to engage youth in responsible and challenging activities for the betterment of others around them. Life skills learning in this case was very action based and similar to that of a sports context as youth learned through doing, serving and reflecting on their experiences. Even further, mentoring programs through physical activity can create opportunities for goal setting, problem solving, moral decision making, but also can engage students because of its fun through play (Martinek, Shilling, & Johnson, 2001). The evidence suggests that the living skills expectations such as those within the Ontario HPE curriculum may be successfully achieved through environments such physical education and sport.

Although there is clear evidence of the positive experience one can associate with using physical activity and sport in youth learning life skills there is however research that we need to be aware of that suggests otherwise. Some research has shown that results from participation in sports can lead to outcomes such as stress, tension, lack of moral reasoning, disrespect for others and opponents, increased emphasis on winning and lack

of self esteem (Adler & Adler, 1994; Bredemeier, 1988; Decker & Lasley, 1995; Siegenthaler & Gonzalez, 1997). In a study related to extracurricular activities and its association with educational and risky behaviour outcomes, sports activities were ones that both contribute to positive (academic achievement, pro-social activities) and negative outcomes (pressure to do things, substance use-alcohol). In Gould and Carson's (2008) review of life skills research they note that findings show that there can be an emphasize placed on sport outcomes which results in educational values being overlooked.

Other barriers mentioned in the unsuccessfulness of the sport context is the lack of training, especially in life skills, as coaches struggled in terms of describing how they actually taught life skills. This was found in a study done by McCallister et al. (2000) that interviewed coaches within youth sports programs. What they discovered was that when coaches were asked to share what values and life skills they taught their explanations were limited. However, despite coaches not being able to describe them, they expressed their importance and how they felt they should be present in their programs. In fulfilling its' role and place within their programs, coaches held the perception that simply talking about life skills would do. McCallister et al. (2000) found this contradicting to the research that suggested that environmental and climate need to carefully chosen in order to provide such a learning experience. As a result of their findings they highlight how the lack of the knowledge and training in how to create a learning environment has resulted in youth not being able to reach these desired outcomes. Evidence presented here shows that the sport and physical activity environment has the potential to play a greater positive role with the lives of youth, but it is important to look further into how life skills are

perceived and effectively put into practice to ensure that negative outcomes don't become a reality.

Life Skills: Curriculum Taught Not Caught

In considering the possible barriers and negative outcomes that the sport context has, much of its existence is due to the factors in structuring the activities' environments and the knowledge that coaches, teachers, and other practitioners have in making it life skills oriented. However, teachers and coaches must recognize that it is not necessarily participation in sport itself that ensures life skills development, but the experience that is designed in a way that its participants are able to apply what is learned into other areas (e.g. school, home, and or the workplace) (Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005) Mahoney and Stattin (2000) also noted that the structure and context of the activity is significant in whether participation has positive or negative outcomes. Fraser-Thomas, Côté, and Deakin (2005) also recognized that increasing competitiveness corresponds to the physical nature that some bring to the environment thereby leading to negative outcomes (e.g. violence, poor sportsmanship, and aggression). They also share the importance of considering that sport has the potential to play a key role in positive youth development such as life skills, but is not automatic and therefore dependent on a significant amount of factors in its design, planning and implementation. This shares the same message that when considering teaching life skills through a sport context, we must take hold the perception and belief that life skills need to be taught rather than caught (Hodge, 1989). Sport then provides a setting for life skills to flourish but requires intentional teaching, awareness of environment and clear objectives in order for negative outcomes to be avoided and positive ones to emerge.

The following studies describe this intentional teaching of life skill expectations through various physical activity and sport program as well as strategies used to be successful in its objectives. Solomon (1997) gives an outline of appropriate instructional strategies for enhancing children's character development in physical activity setting such as sports and physical education. The ways suggested to foster this learning process is to include a) moral dilemmas into the activity setting allowing for problem solving and discussing of fair play b) allowing students to create activities with peers c) using positive reinforcement and modeling for students to see positive character and d) connecting character development from class to other settings. In other instances, instructional strategies in school classrooms that took a social learning and structural development positions in a program called "Fair Play for kids" where the curriculum centered on the decision making processes and roles of children in moral issues led children to improve in moral development (Ebbeck, Weiss, & Gibbons, 1995). Another study by Martinek, Schilling and Hellison (2006) investigated the process of developing life skills in low-income minority youth, which had them progress from self-serving to caring and compassionate leaders. They found that in participating in a sport-based program youth progressed from lower stages to higher stages showing a development of leadership skills in their role as youth leaders.

The study conducted by Goudas, Dermitzaki, Leondari, and Danish (2006) focused on examining the effectiveness of a life skills training program that was taught within physical education lessons. A modified version of the Going for the Goal program (GOAL) was led by high school students that facilitated activities that encouraged youth to set goals, make future plans and think positively. Results showed that life skills

training can be effectively implemented within a physical education context as students showed enhanced knowledge about life skills and had built confidence in their own goal setting. Other studies on the use of the GOAL program showed increases in knowledge of life skills and greater competence in achieving personal goals (S. Danish & Nellen, 1997). Wright, White, and Gaebler-Spira (2004) followed Hellison's Personal Social Responsibility Model (PSRM) in an adaptive setting with youth with cerebral palsy. In this martial arts based program they found that with the effective implementation of PSRM, there was potential to encourage an increased sense of ability, a positive learning experience and positive social interaction. This was especially evident when the activity was linked to therapeutic and relevant material.

Successful curriculum programs have contributed to educational settings in promoting life skills in the classroom. The "Sport for Peace" curriculum design that Ennis et al. (1999) shares is one that encourages girls to succeed in physical education and sport based programs. In her study, they found that the sport environment was improved and girls had an enhanced perception of success, claimed ownership of the sport content and engaged in cooperative activities that changed boys attitudes towards girl's abilities. The results of these studies mentioned support that when life skills training is placed in sport or physical education contexts, the life skills that are learned are not at the expense of learning sport skills but can improve both areas of physical and psychosocial development for the betterment of youth lives (Papacharisis et al., 2005).

Teachers' Roles and Strategies in Creating a Life Skills Learning

The role of mentors is another significant attribute in the successful process of learning life skills. Zimmerman and Bingenheimer (2002) looked at the roles of natural

mentors in the resiliency of urban youth and found that 52% of the adolescents that reported having a natural mentor were also less likely to be involved in drug use and had gained a positive attitude towards school. Jowett (2007) emphasized how personal relationships within a sport context can be a force in fostering the development of an athlete's physical and psychosocial skills. Specifically, looking at the coach-athlete partnership, she described how the intentional development of this relationship could grow to one that is based on appreciation and respect for each other. Relationships that are effective, which are characterized by being empathic, understanding, honest, supporting, accepting, responsive, friendly, caring, respectful and positive, can have the opportunity to demonstrate and foster other relationships between peers, parents and other coaches (Jowett, 2007). Therefore the role of a mentor, such as a coach or teacher in the learning of life skills has significant influence and importance.

The role of a teacher, leader or coach in regards to the teaching strategies they use to facilitate life skills learning is very important. Compagnone (1995) conducted a six-week project with a grade five class focusing on Hellison (2011) PSRM and its effects on four boys. In doing this, he describes strategies that were created as a result of the project. Such strategies included, beginning the program early, having a clear beginning, incorporating reflection session, knowing students development levels, continuously monitoring and observing, creating peer involvement and being persistent in teaching. These strategies show the many ways in which we need to thoughtfully consider the way life skills can be taught and how the teaching strategies chosen can have an effect on the process of life skills learning.

In examining the role of an adult in life skills learning, Larson, Walker, and Pearce (2005) looked at the experiences of participants in programs with differing degrees of youth and adult influence over activities. In youth-driven programs, experiences included ownership and empowerment leading to leadership and planning skills while adult-driven programs gave experiences that focused on developing youth's specific talents and attributes. Their conclusions led them to understand the process of how experiences cultivated life skills learning as well as the differences between the two and their appropriateness for certain contexts and objectives. In response to this, Hellison, (1985) gives insight into his model sharing that there is not a "cookbook" that has a guide to the best strategies to use. These thoughts direct us toward understanding that the process of life skills teaching is very dynamic and dependent on a multitude of factors that need to be considered as one looks at the process of life skills learning from the role of a teacher.

Key characteristics have been identified that will help guide the roles teachers take and decisions they make regarding planning and implementation. In a study conducted on the relationship between quality youth programs and developmental outcomes, Yohalem and Wilson-Ahlstrom (2010) identified eight features of programs that are important in supporting positive youth development. Such features include; a) physical and psychological safety; b) appropriate structure; c) supportive relationships; d) sense of belonging; e) positive social norms; f) support for efficacy and mattering; g) skill building opportunities; and h) integration of family, school, and community. In understanding effective program characteristics and examples of programs in current research that have had success in their methods of giving children and youth life skill

learning opportunities, practitioners have a solid base to look to in order to guide their own practice and research.

The Importance of Transfer in Life Skills Learning:

As we have established, much research has focused on whether life skills can be developed through sports participation. Lack of attention has been given to how these life skills are actually attained and the process of teaching them. The process of learning life skills is not simple in nature, but is abstract and can occur over long periods of time with its change and improvement hard to observe (Jones & Lavalley, 2009). Due to this complexity, some facilitators of sports programs such as coaches recognize the importance of life skills teaching, but struggle in explaining how they attempt to teach them or see them in action (McCallister et al., 2000). Much research that has been done identifies that just sport participation does not automatically let life skills emerge, understanding the process of young people learning life skills is very important.

A common theme that emerges from the literature in concerns with the process of learning life skills is the need for youth to be able to transfer skills from one area to another. Cutforth and Puckett, (1999) while implementing their service-learning program for youth emphasized the need for active pedagogy in that “there should be a connection between school and the world outside” (p.154). This connection engages youth in learning life skills, as they are able to connect issues and problems they may encounter in their own lives. Incorporating the link to transfer in a sports setting, youth are able to recognize the skills in their success through sport and relate them to skills in other areas of their lives (Danish & Nellen, 1997).

Explaining this further in relation to a sport context, Danish (1995) makes the point that children's value of their sport experience relies upon their application of concepts learned through their participation to other areas of their life. He discusses that out of the children who are participating in sports, only a very small proportion of them will actually turn this into a career. As a result, those that do not will need to develop other skills and interests and will need to apply those valuable concepts learned in their participation in sports to other areas. Danish (2002) extended his definition further by stating that "these transferable behaviours are called life skills" (p.53) emphasizing that for something to be considered a life skill it needs to be able to transfer over to multiple life situations.

What we can take from this is that life skills are not strictly about learning the life skills themselves, but about taking it and applying it in various contexts. Such contexts suggested by (Danish, 2002), are ones such as our families, school, workplace, neighborhoods and communities. In taking into consideration what we know about life skills through the research and expertise of some scholars, we can take their meaning and focus on its relationship to a sport or physical activity setting. Gould and Carson (2008) in their own review of life skills define it as "those internal personal assets, characteristics and skills... that can be facilitated or developed in sport and are transferred for use in a non-sport setting" (p.60). As such as we move forward to understanding the implementation process of curriculum expectations it is important to take into consideration how transfer and meaning play are factors associated with successful learning amongst youth in the area of life skills.

Future Directions

There has been a substantial amount of literature related to life skills development in youth, but further areas need to be explored more in depth. There is a need for research in life skills that looks at the development of life skills over significant periods of time. Lerner et al. (2005) discusses the need for longitudinal research in studying areas of positive youth development as well as centering research on a variety of young people and different communities. Since, life skills learning has been recognized as a process that extends a long duration (Jones & Lavalley, 2009), longitudinal studies could give interesting insight to the process and effectiveness in retaining life skills and perhaps how these life skills extend into adulthood. This could lead to findings on how life skills development varies between ethnic and cultural backgrounds as well as different gender and age groups. Durlak, Weissberg, and Pachan (2010) have identified that research needs to improve due to the lack of data on specific racial and ethnic groups and participants of certain socio-economic statuses.

Other research areas for possible exploration concern life skills training for practitioners that are involved in sport and physical activity. Walsh (2008) describes the ways in which a physical education teacher education (PETE) program integrated alternative curriculum models. In recognizing that practitioners in physical education, especially pre service teachers, were holding the assumption that development of the affective domain happens automatically, they used a teaching personal social and responsibility model to counter the under representation of life skills learning within teacher training. Gould, Chung, Smith, and White (2006) in regards to life skills training suggested that there is a need for a nationwide survey to understand the issues that youth

face today as well as the ways in which coaches address these needs. More information needs to pertain to the challenges coaches face in implementing life skills based programs as well as the appropriate training and educational information available to them. Further research that looks at training in life skills, whether that is in teacher training or coaching development, could be explored and perhaps provide interesting findings on how practitioners value life skills development.

The current literature and research gaps support the purpose of this study in looking further into understanding the experiences of teachers while integrating living skills through the physical education setting. Such research will contribute further into becoming aware of the importance of living skills for students and understanding the different levels of education associated with fulfilling curriculum expectations. The next section details the methods and methodology that will be taken to fulfill such research objectives.

Chapter 3: Methods

This chapter outlines the research process that was done in discovering educators' experiences with the integration of living skills as part of Health and Physical Education (H&PE) curriculum. It includes a description of my conceptual and philosophical orientations that have guided my methodology as well as the design characteristics and organization of the study. In addition, methods that were used are explained in order to give an account of data collection and analysis procedures.

Qualitative Research.

To fulfill my objective in understanding the experiences that teachers have in the integration of living skills through H&PE, I chose to take a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research has the ability to describe, capture and communicate experiences of those participating and therefore will add to the representation of what is happening in participants' worlds and in their own words (Patton, 2002). By incorporating qualitative research methods I was able to engage in observations, discussions and conversations that helped portray a reflective account of teachers' roles within the integration of living skills in HPE settings.

Interpretivist Paradigm.

It is important to establish my paradigm as an interpretivist and set what Patton (2002) describes as "a world view- a way of thinking and making sense of the complexities of the real world" (p.69). An interpretivist worldview consists of looking at the nature of reality as being socially constructed, with research being based on an understanding of a particular situation rather than the findings of universal laws or rules

(Willis, 2007). In doing this research, my goal was to focus on this concept of understanding teachers' experiences and take on an emic approach which "looks at things through the eyes of the members of the culture being studied" (Willis, 2007, p.100). I believe that by taking this position, truth is relative to the groups that produce and consume research and therefore as a researcher I interacted with these groups in order to gain an understanding of their experiences.

Furthermore, the purpose of my research from this perspective is central to the term "*verstehen*" meaning understanding, rather than the positivist thinking of "*erklaren*" meaning the discovery of "law like rules or generalizations that can be used well beyond the situation studied" (Willis, 2007, p.100). As a researcher, I do not believe there are generalizations that can be made, but there are understandings that can be communicated to others and used as part of their context and decision-making. In conducting qualitative research from an interpretivist perspective, I was able to focus on "discovery, insight and understanding from the perspective of those being studied... the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education" (Merriam, 1988, p.3).

Case Study Design

A case study design was used to answer the questions proposed. Case studies as described by Stake (1995) are used by researchers to explore a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals in depth. He further notes that these cases are bounded by the time in which they take place and the activity they represent. Yin (2009) describes this even further by detailing that "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context,

especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p.18). With this said, I used a case study method because I wanted to understand the real-life phenomenon of teachers’ experiences in integrating living skills in the contextual conditions of a school’s health and physical education setting. I looked at these experiences through the boundaries of the HPE curriculum and the living skills expectations highlighted within it.

Type of Case Study

Case studies can differ in terms of the size of the bounded case, such as whether it involves one or more individuals, groups, programs activities as well as the intent of the analysis of the case (Creswell, 2003). The variation that I used was a descriptive case study. Because of its descriptive nature, it provided my study with what Yin (2011) considers the ability to offer rich and revealing insights to the social world of this particular case. As I looked at the experiences of teachers within their integration of living skills expectations in the HPE setting, the selection of this specific case study variation will allow me to gather rich and detailed evidence.

Understanding Limitations of a Case Study Design

Although case studies have their advantages, there are some who view them as a less desirable form of research methodology. Yin (2009) details the prejudices against using this form of research methodology explaining that a primary concern has been over the lack of rigour in case study research. These instances have been shown through the argument that too many times the case study investigator has been sloppy, has not followed systematic procedures and has allowed bias views to influence that direction of the findings and conclusions. In order to challenge these assumptions of case study

research, it is imperative that the planning process is thoughtfully considered and that a rigorous approach is taken in all aspects of the design process. As well, narrowing the design further to a descriptive case study design will allow holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events, such as the integration experiences amongst a diversity of educators. Based upon Stake's (1995) view, a case study is an appropriate approach when the investigator has clear, identifiable and bounded cases whose intentions are to provide an in-depth understanding of them.

Sampling

In selecting the case, I used purposeful convenience sampling procedures. Patton (2002) explains that the powerful and logical nature of using this type of sampling is founded in selecting information rich cases for in depth study. In doing this I used a criterion sampling approach whereby the case met a predetermined criterion of importance (Patton, 2002). The reasoning in using these was to understand cases that were likely to be information rich and relative to the research questions chosen. For this study, the criterion of importance was that those participating had to have some previous or current involvement in the implementation of an HPE curriculum. In doing this, those that became a part of my study held possible educator roles such as public health nurses, elementary teachers (generalists and specialists), secondary teachers, board consultants, and possibly ministry of education representatives. It is important to note that the terminology of educators is used throughout to describe all of these positions as a group and should be recognized as such and separately from teachers as they might take on different roles and responsibilities. As well, I expanded and left my recruitment of participants open to all different levels and types of education settings. This expanded my

possible participant selection to include educators from elementary and secondary levels in HPE within public, catholic and private institutions. In including a diversity of educators, I was able to reveal valuable insights in regards to the integration of living skills in different H&PE programs.

In the beginning of my research, the number of educators required for the study was not set to a specific number. In order to seek what Patton (2002) calls “breadth”, a more open range of experiences for a smaller amount of people, the number set to those that participated through recruitment via workshops was not set to a specific number. This was because of the uncertainty of how many would be accessed and their self-selection to participate. As such the selection of educators was based on the criterion I had formed, but also heavily relied on participants availability and willingness to participate in the research process. Due to school board privacy and research policies, myself as the research was not able to approach anyone associated with the board directly without prior approval. As such, all participants were recruited through a professional conference that I attended as well as through personal contacts from private institutions in which I had research approval. Although I was unable to access schools, at the conference I was able to connect with a variety of educators from across different regions of Ontario creating a diversity of participants that I might not have gotten with recruiting from one school board area.

In my research I used a smaller sample size that was valuable as it created a wealth of detailed data and provided information rich experiences that fit towards my purpose of understanding teachers’ experiences within integrating living skills. Although my research took the focus of creating data that was centered on rich details of a smaller

group of participants, I however did not limit my research to a maximum number of those involved. I wanted to be sure to include and maximize information of my sampling to the point where no new information was being presented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Due to the uncertainty I had in regards to what participants I would recruit, it became clear that during the research process my sampling size changed. Patton (2002) described how “One may add to the sample as field work unfolds. One may change the sample if information emerges that indicates the value of that change. The design should be understood to be flexible and emergent” (p.246). Emergent sampling therefore became apparent as research was conducted.

Patton (2002) explains that the extent to which a research study is broad or narrow depends on its purpose, the resources available, the time available and the interests of those involved. As I have already shared the purpose in relation to the selection of participants, I will further discuss the influence of time, resources and interests. Ideally, due to the time and accessibility participants, in order to collect sufficient amounts of data the participants were recruited from schools within the south-central region of Ontario and at conferences in which I had access to. Recruitment relied heavily on speaking with personal contacts within private schools and at conferences. In addition, even though research approval was granted at one board region, as a result due to the restricted access to directly approach educators, no participants emerged from this group. In this sense, my research was narrowed into focusing on perhaps a smaller amount of educators’ experiences then what would have been reached with more time or access. However, in focusing in on the participants in my study, I was presented with the depth and rich experiences needed for the purpose of answering my research questions.

Participants

Since I was interested in the experiences of educators in the integration of living skills in the HPE setting, my units of analysis were educators that currently or had been involved in a HPE program. The sample that emerged reflected the self-selection of participants from professional conferences and private institutions that were willing to participate in the study. Each participant that wanted to participate gave permission through the reading and signing of a consent form that detailed the purpose of the research, role of the participant, ethical implications, and feedback and reporting timelines.. A more detailed description of this can be found further on in this chapter in the ethics section. The following details a list of those that participated and gives details relate to their sex, their position related to HPE, school level and years of experience in their roles.

	Position	Sex	School Level	Years Experience
1.	Teacher-HPE Specialist Department Head	Male	Public Secondary: Grades 9-12	15 years
2.	Teacher- HPE Specialists	Female	Public Elementary K-12	10 years
3.	Teacher	Female	Private Elementary K-12	15 years
4.	Teacher- Assistant Director of Athletics & HPE	Male	Private Elementary &Secondary K-12	30 years
5.	Student Teacher- Junior/Intermediate	Male	Catholic Elementary 4-8	New Teacher
6.	Student Teacher – Intermediate/Senior	Female	Public Secondary 9-12	New Teacher
7.	Student Teacher – Junior Intermediate	Female	Public Elementary 4-8	New Teacher
8.	Consultant –Health and Physical Education	Male	Public Elementary and Secondary K-12	1 year (Consultant) 15 years (Teaching)
9.	Consultant/Part-Time Teacher – Health and	Female	Catholic Elementary K- 12	6 years (Consultant)

	Physical Education			27 years (Teaching)
10.	Education Officer – Curriculum Development HPE	Female	Ontario Curriculum Review HPE K-8	6 years
11.	Public Health Nurse	Female	K-12	2.5 years
12.	Public Health Nurse	Female	K-12	5 years

Table 3.0: Participant Information

Data Collection

In collecting data for this study, I used a variety of methods that included participant reflection feedback sheets, interviews and observation field notes. In using a combination of data collection methods, I was able to provide multiple sources of evidence to validate and cross check my findings (Patton, 2002). Yin (2009) notes that no single source is considered to have an advantage over all the others. Together, they are highly complementary which thereby encourages the use of many sources as possible. Merriam (1988) reiterates the rationale of including multiple sources with case study research by stating that “the flaws of one method are often the strengths of another, and by combining methods, observers can achieve the best of each while overcoming their unique deficiencies” (Merriam, 1988, p. 69). This identifies the usefulness of the multiple methods I used and the way they all interacted to provide rich and meaningful data.

Conference Workshop & Participant Reflection Feedback Sheet.

I conducted, along with my supervisor, two one and half hour workshops at the Ontario Physical Education Association (OPHEA) conference in October of 2012. Within our two workshop sessions at the conference I shared with participants practical examples

of how to integrate living skills expectations into other strands of the curriculum and activities in HPE. The session was organized in a way that promoted hands-on learning through activities as well debriefs that encouraged discussion about the integration of living skills expectations. At the end of each session, participants were given a reflection feedback sheet that asked them to answer a few questions related to their own experiences in integrating living skills. This sheet can be found in Appendix B. Attached to this sheet was an invitational letter and informed consent sheet detailing the research study and whether they wanted to participate in a follow-up interview after the workshop. The reflection feedback sheets were used as a discussion piece with participants that had chosen to do a follow-up interview after the conference.

Participant Interviews.

The purpose of interviews in data collection allowed myself as a researcher to enter the perspective of educators at various levels of education in order to find out as Patton so eloquently describes as a way “to find out what is in and on someone’s else’s mind, to gather their stories” (p. 341). As well, the utilization of interviews illustrates the intentions of the researcher to take part in conversation as a way to understand the world. In this case, I tried to take on the educator’s point of view and unfold the meaning of their experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

In conducting interviews with teachers and consultants I needed to take into consideration the time and place available to conduct them as the schedule of participants was relatively busy and unpredictable. For those educators participating in the interviews from recruitment at workshops, interviews were done via telephone, computer Skype

session or in person at the university's office. Those that were recruited from schools in which I had approval for research had the option of having their interview in person at the their respective school. The length of my interviews and their settings emerged depending on the person being interviewed and their availability. All interviews were recorded and transcribed for further use in the data analysis process with a digital recording device. The rationale of using interviews was to explore their experiences and gain information relative to the process of integrating living skills in HPE.

I chose to use a semi-structured interview style for my research. As described by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), semi-structured interviews are “planned and flexible interviews with a purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena” (p.327). In using this, I prepared questions, but did not necessarily follow them in a rigid manner as questions emerged as the interviews progressed. In this case, I followed what Yin (2009) describes as pursuing qualitative inquiry with fluidity rather than rigidity. A general interview guide helped me as it outlined possible issues, topics, and subject areas for exploration, which allowed for further questioning and probing. My guide followed an interview protocol much like the one Creswell (2003) outlines, having opening statements for the interview, the key research questions, probes to follow key questions, transition messages for the interviewer and additional space for recording comments and reflective notes. The guide can be found in Appendix C.

Reflective Interview Notes

Reflective interview notes were taken after every interview conducted. This helped myself as a researcher to recall the setting, the people who participated, the

environment, informal and structured interactions and non-verbal communication (Patton, 2002). The reflection sheet included information relate to the portrait of the subject in order to recall important background information and/or unique characteristics of participants. It also described the setting and any activities that were done during the interview. I also made notes on relevant conversations that led up to the interviews as well as behavior of both participant and myself before and throughout the interview. Reflective notes were made about key moments that occurred throughout the interviews and helped in remembering events that took place. Such notes were also used as a tool to begin the process of analysis as well as to critically reflect on the methods I was using and my technique in conducting interviews. An example of this of observation field note template can be found in Appendix D.

All of the data collection sources mentioned are valuable to the research that I undertook. However, it is important to recognize that there are limitations and possible pitfalls that I could have encountered in using them. A primary concern is in the process of observation with the role of researcher and their possible obtrusiveness. This may in unknown ways cause people within the setting to act in a different fashion resulting in the distortion of the data (Patton, 2002). As well, Merriam (1988) discusses how it is imperative that “in doing observations that full notes be written, typed and dictated as soon after the observation in order not to miss a critical observation” (p.96). Furthermore, one might question the quality of the interviews conducted. In order to ensure proper interviews, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) share that “good interviews rests upon the craftsmanship of the researcher, which goes beyond a mastery of questioning techniques to encompass knowledge of the research topic, sensitivity to the social relation of the

interviewer and interviewee, and an awareness of epistemological and ethical aspects of research interviewing” (p.298). As well, documents can be criticized by being incomplete or inaccurate and challenged based on their quality and completeness (Patton, 2002). Despite their weaknesses, by using multiple sources I was able to build on the strengths of each type of data collection method and ensure trustworthiness in my results.

Data Analysis

In order to make sense out of the data that I collected, I engaged in the process of data analysis. In this process, I prepared the data for different analyses in order to create deeper understanding, representation and interpretation of the data (Creswell, 2003). It is important to point out that my data analysis did not only occur at the end of data collection, but commenced at the beginning and throughout the research study. A qualitative design such as this is “emergent; one does not know who to ask, or where to look next without analyzing data as they are collected” (Merriam, 1988, p.123). As a researcher, it was important for me to be aware that making sense of the data emerged while still in the field marking the beginning of my analysis.

The process of data collection consisted of first organizing and documenting the data collected in the form of a research database (Yin, 2009). As I collect data, I stored it in an electronic file that was password protected with additional hard copies being secured in a locked office in WH142 at Brock University. While organizing, I changed original names to pseudonyms and changed identifiable material of participants. I used only the use of elements of word processing programs to facilitate the storage, coding, retrieval, comparison and linking of data collected. Organizing data effectively aided in speeding up the process of locating themes, grouping data, identifying categories and

making comparison between data sets (Patton, 2002). In not using any assistive qualitative computer program, myself as the researcher was at the heart of conducting analysis by going through the data on my own.

As I went through the process of data analysis and began to organize my data, I went through a few stages. To best illustrate this process, Taylor and Bogdan (1998) identify the general stages of qualitative analysis. I have already discussed briefly the organization of the data, but now I will touch upon the process of familiarization, which is considered to be the “ongoing discovery” stage. Since I used interviews, the transcription process included transcribing interviews verbatim and making an effort to include non-verbal cues that might have ended up being important elements of conversation. Transcribing all my interviews provided me with an “opportunity to get immersed in the data, an experience that usually generates emergent insights” (Patton, 2002, p. 441). This helped in preparing my data for further analysis and becoming very familiar with the content gathered.

After completing the preliminary stages, I moved into a stage whereby I looked at my data through an in-case analysis. In doing this in-case analysis I looked at each individual transcript and began to look for key words, revelatory phrases, repetitions, stand alone phrases and jargon. Taylor and Bogdan (1998) outline the qualitative process of data analysis, including the process of listing all major themes, concepts, and developed codes. In looking at my data, I labeled segments of information with codes, refining, adding, collapsing, expanding and redefining them (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). I proceeded to do this for each participant immersing myself thoroughly in each of the interviews over and over again until no new codes seemed to emerge. I then proceeded

into the next stage to look at the interviews in a cross-cohort by question analysis. In this stage I made a table that displayed participants responses relative to the groups they represented. The details of these groups will be explained further in detail in the following chapter. In doing this cross case, I made further analyses related to identifying codes that were significant as well as looking for patterns related to responses that emerged amongst specific groups.

After coding was done through these two stages, I was able to sort my data into categories, reducing the units of data into a manageable size for analysis and development of major themes. Merriam (1988) emphasizes developing these categories, and themes by looking for patterns in the data thereby organizing the data into some scheme that makes sense to the investigator. In having coded the data thoroughly, I began to creatively synthesize the codes and patterns I found. In creating these themes I spent an extensive amount of time re-reading, connecting and reflecting on all the interviews identifying how the data fit together. This process continued and created larger categories that would later make sense of the complexity of the data and organize my findings and results into a meaningful representation of what was shared by participants.

By moving through each of these stages, I took on an inductive analysis. Inductive analysis allowed “the important dimensions to emerge from patterns found in the cases under study without presupposing in advance what the important dimensions will be” (Patton, 2002, p.56). By doing this, I privileged the data from the participants and let those codes, patterns, themes and categories be generated out of what they gave me and moved outward through a series of analytical steps that was heavily informed by them. By taking the extensive time to immerse myself fully in every dimension of their

interviews and my reflective notes, each step of the analytical process was effective in making sense of the data and representing the experiences of those informants that participated.

Ethics

It is important to discuss that “qualitative methods are highly personal and interpersonal, because naturalistic inquiry takes the researcher into the real world...qualitative inquiry may be more intrusive and involve greater reactivity...” (p.407). The unique nature of qualitative methods makes it important to consider ethical guidelines in which your research might follow. The rules, guidelines and principles are not applied systematically because of the situational and contextual factors that determine how and when they are relevant (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). All ethical considerations have a focus on dilemmas associated with working participants involved in educational settings, specifically in relation to teachers and their classroom practices.

Brock Research Ethics Board Approval

In order to begin the research process, ethical approval from the Research Ethics Board (REB) at Brock University was submitted in April 2012 and subsequently accepted in May 2012 (File# 11-248). A request for a modification to add the workshops to this study was approved on August 21, 2012. In having this, I was able to approach and recruit participants for the study.

Informed Consent

The process of informed consent includes informing the research participants about the overall purpose, design and any possible risks and benefits from participating in

the research study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). One adult consent form was used for participants involved in the interview component of the study. Those educators who were interested in participating in an interview completed an adult consent form. All consent forms were given to potential participants prior to any involvement in the study. The full disclosure of the information gave my research an overt orientation whereby the people in the setting were aware they were being studied (Patton, 2002). Participation in the research study was voluntary and all those that decided to participate had the right to withdraw at anytime. Everyone in the study filled out a consent form giving permission to participate in an interview and have it recorded for future analysis. The Consent form used to recruit participants can be found in Appendix E.

Confidentiality

The role of confidentiality implies that private data that identifies the participants will not be disclosed (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The process of confidentiality concerns what information should be available and to whom. In terms of the research conducted, those involved were informed that all information, such as interviews and other information disclosed by participants is kept confidential to myself and my supervisor during and after research has been conducted. No other parties such as school boards, principals or students affiliated with the educator will have access to any information. Pseudonyms and number codes were used in all written documents to ensure confidentiality of participants is maintained. All data was stored in a locked room and electronic files were password protected.

Ethical Awareness

The process of understanding ethical issues within my research study was a continual process. “The best that an individual researcher can do is to be conscious of the ethical issues that pervade the research process, from conceptualizing the problem to dissemination the findings” (Merriam, 1988, p.184). It is important not only to be aware of protecting those within the study, but also protecting myself as the researcher. As Patton (2002) shares “It is important to protect those who honour us with their stories by participating in our studies. It is also important to protect yourself” (p.416). As I pursued this research, I kept a conscious effort to reflect on how I could protect those participating as well as myself in order to ensure a successful and beneficial experience for all.

Trustworthiness, Quality & Authenticity

The trustworthiness, quality and authenticity in research depend on distinct but related elements identified by Patton (2002). These elements include, rigorous methods; compromising the production of high quality data and analysis, credibility of the researcher; involving their training, experience, track record and presentation of self; in regards to the value of qualitative research which will be explained within my ethics section.

Rigorous Methods

Rigorous methods have many dimensions that can help in the authenticity and trustworthiness of research and some have already been touched upon in my discussion of data collection and analysis. First, design checks are important in questioning the limitations of certain aspects including reasoning for the selection of a specific sample size and participants, as well as the time spent in the field to conduct observations,

interviews and review documents (Patton, 2002). The initial design decisions described in previous sections of this proposal have been justified in order to ensure a level of credibility in my research.

Triangulation

To further enhance the trustworthiness and authenticity of my research in concerns with my methods, I included the process of triangulation. The logic behind using this is founded in the notion that their needs to be multiple methods of data collection and analysis in order to provide different aspects of evidence and the ability to do cross-data checks (Patton, 2002). Specifically within this research, I used triangulation of sources and analyst triangulation. I triangulated different data sources such as interviews, reflection sheets and observation field notes described in previous sections along with comparing and cross checking them to ensure consistency in my findings. Analyst triangulation consisted of using multiple observers other than the researcher as the only analyst. My review committee consists of faculty members from the department of Applied Health Science at Brock University that have provided feedback and expertise to further enhance the credibility in my research.

It is important to consider that throughout my research there were instances where data did not necessarily fit with patterns or themes that appeared. According to Creswell (2003) “because real-life is composed of different perspective that do not always coalesce, discussing contrary information adds to the credibility of an account for a reader” (p.196). As a researcher, I made an effort in searching for clues that led me into different directions. As such I included all findings even if it was negative and discrepant information to original perceptions. Including such writing into my research “adds

credibility by showing the analyst's authentic search for what makes most sense rather than marshaling all the data toward a single conclusion." (Patton, 2002, p.555). Dealing openly with these instances assisted my research in showing the authenticity and credibility of my data.

Credibility of the Researcher

According to Patton (2002), in qualitative findings "there is doubt about the nature of analysis" because it's central focus depends on "the insights and conceptual capabilities of the analyst" (p.553). There is a need for others to understand myself as the researcher by sharing with them my perspective, personal connections and knowledge. Although I am a new to the field of research, my experience within the field of education and physical activity has been extensive over the past 5 years. I currently hold a Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education and a Bachelor's Degree in Education from Brock University. Throughout my pursuits in getting my degrees, I have been actively involved in school settings for extensive periods of time by conducting numerous observations, creating and implementing curriculum expectations, designing lesson plans and engaging in teaching responsibilities. My accreditation as an Ontario Certified Teacher with the Ontario College of Teachers displays my credibility as a professional within the field as well as my ability to relate and interact with those that will be participating in my research.

Research Journaling

It is important that I present my own perspectives, training and knowledge to my intended audience, but also take a look at myself and question how who I am as a person can contribute to the outcome of my research. In doing this, I used the form of research

journaling in order to observe myself as well as my thoughts throughout the research process. The reason behind creating this journal is to satisfy the process of reflexivity that is highly valued in qualitative research. As Patton (2002) reminds researchers “reflexivity reminds the qualitative inquirer to observe herself or himself so as to be attentive to and conscious of the cultural, political, social linguistic and ideological origins of her and his own perspective and voice as well as the perspective and voice of those she or he observes and talks to during field work” (p. 299). This continuous reflective approach has allowed me in reporting personal information that may affect the process of data collection, analysis and interpretation and reaffirm the trustworthiness of my research.

Chapter 4: Results

The following chapter outlines the findings relative to the themes that emerged from analysis. Three categories emerged: Living Skills in Practice, Facing Challenges and Support Systems. Each section will present the major and sub-themes and give a rational to why they were categorized as part of the section. I will also discuss these themes later on in the discussion chapter in relation to my research questions for further insight and results.

Once I had all data collected and had separated it into different categories relative to major themes and corresponding sub-themes I began to look at where excerpts came from relative to my cohort groups. The following is a visual representation of what cohorts certain themes emerged from.

COHORT	1	2	3	
Theme/ Subtheme	Teacher	Student Teacher	Expert – Consultant Ministry	Public Health Nurses
Section 1: Living Skills in Practice				
Major Theme A: Lesson Planning & Content				
i) Including Debriefs and Reflections	✓	✓	✓	
ii) Modeling Behaviour	✓			
iii) Timing & Placement	✓			
iv) Using Code Systems & Prompts		✓	✓	
v) Use of Language & Vocabulary	✓	✓		
vi) Progressing Simple to Complex		✓		
vii) Focus on Health & Character Education	✓		✓	✓
viii) Cooperative Games & Social Interactions	✓	✓	✓	
Major Theme B: Pedagogy				
i) Student Centered	✓	✓	✓	
• Knowing Students’ Interests	✓			
• Student & Observation Feedback	✓			

• Building Trusting Relationships		✓		
• Student Choice in Activities		✓	✓	
ii) Explicit Teaching	✓	✓		
iii) Teachable Moments	✓	✓		
Major Theme C: Teaching Philosophy				
i) The Holistic Educator		✓		
ii) The Whole- Child	✓	✓	✓	✓
iii) School-Wide Approach	✓	✓	✓	✓
iv) Focus on the Life-Span	✓	✓	✓	✓
Section 2: Facing Challenges				
Major Theme A: Knowledge & Understanding				
i) Awareness		✓	✓	✓
ii) Religious & Cultural Differences	✓			✓
iii) Lack Of Qualifications and Background in HPE	✓	✓		
iv) Confidence and Competence				✓
Major Theme B: Conflicting Teaching Philosophies and Value of HPE				
i) Fellow Teachers Conflicting Philosophies & Values	✓	✓	✓	
ii) Valuing Fun & Activity	✓	✓	✓	
iii) Balancing the Focus Between Living Skills & Physical Activity	✓	✓		✓
iv) Changing Views: The Buy Sell Approach			✓	✓
Major Theme C: Competition				
i) Hierarchy of Curriculum Expectations	✓	✓		
ii) The Battle with Numeracy & Literacy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Major Theme D: Time & Access				
i) Reading Documents			✓	✓
ii) Quality HPE Opportunities		✓	✓	✓
iii) Political Climates			✓	✓
Section 3: Support Systems				
Major Theme A: Support Between Educators				
i) Professional Dialogue	✓		✓	✓
ii) Learning Teams	✓	✓		
iii) Mentoring		✓		
Major Theme B: Board & Administrative				
i) Board Consultants	✓		✓	✓
ii) School Administration	✓		✓	

Major Theme C: Professional Organizations				
i) Conferences	✓		✓	✓
ii) Document Resources		✓	✓	
Major Theme D: Community				
i) Community Programs/Facilities	✓	✓		
ii) Public Health				✓
iii) Parents	✓			✓
Major Theme E: Professional Development Sessions				
i) Showing What Living Skills Look Like in Practice		✓	✓	
ii) Engaging in & Experiencing Living Skills		✓	✓	
iii) Promoting Discussion & Sharing	✓		✓	
iii) Building Connections to Established Practice and Activities		✓	✓	✓

Table: 4.0 Themes Represented by Cohorts

The following figure represents the three overall major themes that emerged and acted as a foundation to organize data in order to draw further meaning and interpretation.



Figure: 4.1 Emergent Major Themes

The excerpts, although they have been organized into these major themes, show a relationship that overlaps one another. The overlap, created in the Venn diagram above, illustrates the complex interactions of all three of them in the process of integrating living skills and as such some excerpts might be easily placed in between more than one theme. Due to the amount of depth that was created in each of these major themes I have broken down my analysis using these themes as separate sections with their own corresponding major themes and sub themes. Each section of my analysis will highlight the reasoning behind the placement of those themes giving more insight to how themes were determined and categorized.

Section 1: Living Skills in Practice

The following section highlights themes that connect with how educators incorporate living skills into their professional practice. When analyzing, three different themes in relation to practice emerged. The first major theme that will be discussed relates to the planning, preparation and selection of activities suitable for living skills learning. This is followed by looking at selected pedagogy used by educators in the HPE setting. This section will conclude with themes related to teaching philosophies and approaches used in the integration of living skills. Figure 4.2 illustrates all these themes.

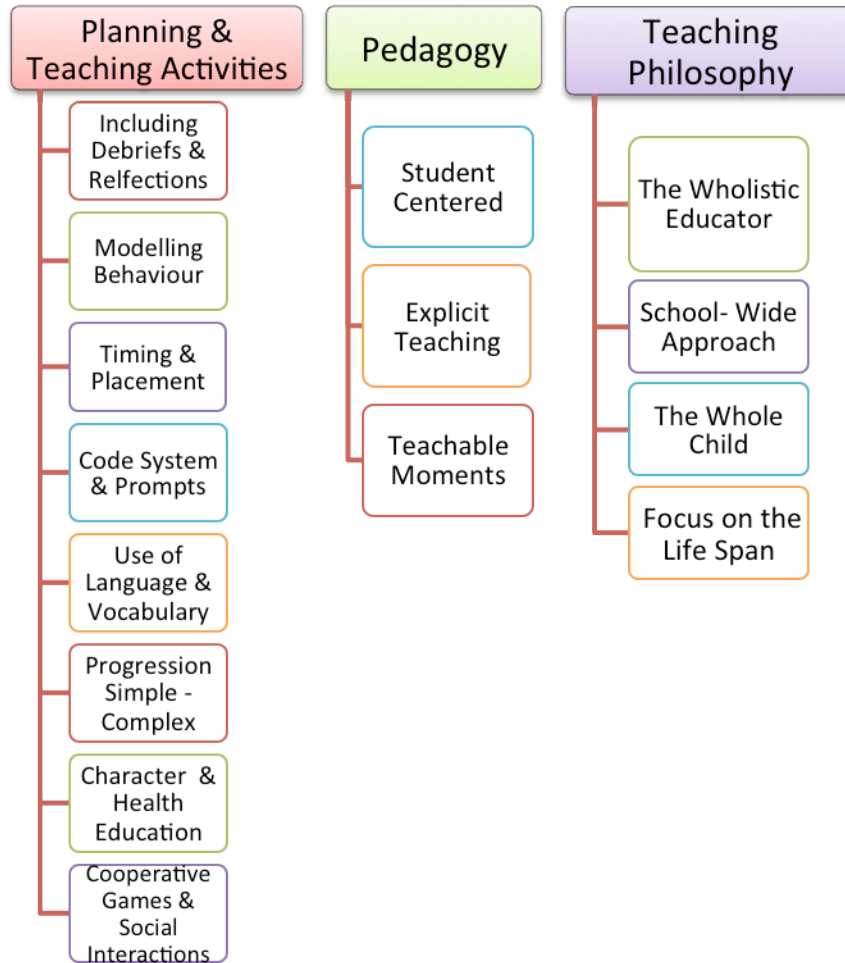


Figure 4.2: Emergent Themes Related to Living Skills In Practice

Major Theme A: Lesson Planning & Content

Subtheme i) Including Debriefs and Reflections. The power of student- teacher conversation through debriefs and reflections were shown to have an important place when integrating living skills. Having these opportunities created further elaboration on the living skills being discussed as well as created moments for students to share their own experiences related to their learning. The following excerpts emphasize the importance of including conversations as a part of practice and using this as a tool for improving communication and social interactions between students.

“I like to let them talk. It’s really important for them to share and so it’s... I like getting sort of their side of the story.” -Teacher

“So it’s more of a conversation I guess. Providing them with some tools to capture self-monitoring or how they’re going to... different ways to communicate and different ways to work on their social skills other than you know ok let’s work as a team and try and get the ball into the net.” -Consultant

Even further being explicit in questioning and taking the time to include it within a lesson was seen as an important integration strategy. The following excerpt illustrates some of the explicit questioning that a teacher planned to use in her own debriefs with her students in order for them to reflect and make connections relative to the living skills. The last example details how more connections are being made from students, not only in HPE, but in other subjects because of the time that is taken for it to be included in lessons.

“So how did it go? How do you think you are doing? Did somebody play with someone they don’t normally play with? Were you partners with someone that wasn’t your own? Did you learn to get along? Did you create...Do you achieve some of the strategies to help your group or team work better? So questioning, but really explicit questioning I would have to say.” -Consultant

“I see connections happening more in other subject areas too where teachers are taking the time after let’s say a math problem and debriefing about it.” - Student Teacher

Subtheme ii) Modeling Behaviour. In extension to building dialogue with students, modeling situations and scenarios for students' learning was identified. The following excerpts highlight how you can use modeling to reenact a situation so that students can see it happening in action. This also gives them the opportunity to look at a particular situation again and infer perhaps something they had missed or had not seen before.

“So helping them through the problem solving model and not just saying “ok you’re ok nothing happen” but taking the time to model it and dialogue with the group I think that is very important with the younger ones.” -Teacher

“I find a lot of success with this role playing thing for the younger grades so they can see... they can actually see this and then I said how’s that look now?” -Teacher

Subtheme iii) Timing & Placement. The placement of when to present and discuss living skills was highlighted as being in multiple sections of a lesson. This placement was shown to be throughout the lesson with people highlighting the beginning and ending sections as key moments where students could be introduced to them and have opportunities to reflect on them. The following excerpts are examples of how teachers have included living skills as a both a foundational piece to start a learning unit as well as an ending piece in the form of assessment opportunities.

“This year I started to use learning goals for living skills right in the classroom and write them out and do a check in and a check out. “ -Consultant

“I know that we have tried to do this year is actually make it part of our big idea when we start our learning units... We make it part of the big idea, but we also basically

introduce and get the kids minds on thinking about whatever unit we are starting... So we connected it all the way through we had some self-evaluation that we had them do to answer the critical question... we connected the living skill questions at the very beginning and at the end had them think critically” -Teacher

Subtheme iv) Use of Code Systems & Prompts. With the new curriculum document, changes have been made in regards to identifying key living skills throughout the strands and how they can be integrated across all grade levels. The use of a code system in place allows teachers to identify types of living skills that work well with specific HPE expectations while the prompts included throughout the document illustrate examples of what these look like in practice in the form of questioning. These were considered useful especially for those unfamiliar with the curriculum making them feel comfortable in the planning and successfully integrating LS into their lessons.

“Similar yes, but the difference is that we’ve got the examples that show, so for this personal skills this is what it looks like and in this strand, in this strand and in this strand and the other difference is that we use the little code system.” -Ministry Officer

“Those (teacher prompts) help a lot because for anyone who say for example in the elementary curriculum or elementary strand who is not a phys-ed specialists those I could see them helping. So then someone who is in the secondary strand who is a phys-ed specialist who still may not have been in the field for 15-20 years just sort of making them feel a lot more comfortable with those.” -Student Teacher

Subtheme v) Use of Language & Vocabulary. The use of language and common vocabulary was important when preparing and delivering lessons successfully. With the introduction of the new curriculum, students might not be aware of the variety of living skills and what terminology there is to describe them. The following excerpts articulate how language is an important component of dialogue and without it can create barriers in learning. Students need to be able to not only understand what living skills are, but be able to express them during discussions and share them with others. Focusing in on highlighting key terms relative to living skills will allow expansion of students' vocabulary and learning of living skills.

“So I say to them “ok what are living skills?” They kind of looking at you and so you give them a couple words to... to get them in the groove and then you can’t stop them right.” -Student Teacher

“Even getting the kids just using the language I think that’s another thing too that the terminology and them speaking to each other with “ok so I’m going to set a goal right now.” Well what does this mean for you? Well it’s personally related. Well, how can you take it a step further getting them to think about the next step of their thinking about themselves, but also socially and interacting with their peers. I find that the language is a barrier sometimes.” -Teacher

Subtheme vi) Progression Simple to Complex. Choosing what living skills to teach and when is an important consideration when planning. The following excerpt uses the example of respect as a foundational living skill that provides a base to moving successfully from more simple living skills to more complex ones.

“I think the biggest thing is just progression that I have found and its kind of a gradual release of responsibility... You talk about teacher guided and then slowly getting the kids to the point where they are able to do it themselves and independently.. I’ll be talking about them showing respect to me and respect to each other. And we build from that because I feel as though that is the foundation. Once you have that respectful comfortable atmosphere for kids to be in then we can start working on more complex life skills. So I start simple and then progressed more difficult. As time goes on building upon that foundation you are able to teach the more complex life skills.” -Student Teacher

In using such a progression the educator is seen to be able to build a foundation that will allow for further success in more complex living skills but also in a way that promote students using them independently without the guidance from them.

Subtheme vii) Focus on Health and Character Education. When choosing content for living skills integration, educators highlighted the use of character and health education in their lessons. Although character education was mentioned, more detail was explained regarding how health education could connect to various living skills. The following gives various examples of how living skills were integrated using health activities and content.

“We started off our health unit right now and we connected it to responsibility so how are you being responsible in terms of taking on your own healthy eating commitment.”
-Teacher

“We do handle that with our nutrition activities and programs...So being able to read nutrition labels, being aware of what Canada’s Food Guide standards are. Then how do we make healthy choices?” – Public Health Nurse

“Well, I think a lot of it has to do with our health curriculum, right? It definitely lends to that. That critical thinking side of things, you know the relationship and social skills. I mean there’s no other subject that directly specifically addresses those types of things.” -Consultant

The uniqueness of content related to Health curriculum relates directly to a multitude of living skills outlined in the curriculum. This uniqueness was identified as a key strategy in giving students quality opportunities to learn and engage in living skills learning.

Subtheme viii) Cooperative Games and Social Interactions

When choosing activities as part of lessons that integrated living skills, educators highlighted using cooperative games that were fun and engaging for students. The HPE setting was identified as a setting that created enjoyment in learning living skills.

“The first thing about teaching living skills in a classroom is they enjoy their time in health and phys-ed better.” -Consultant

Using HPE as a vehicle was seen as effective because providing opportunities to experience them through movement created hidden learning of living skills. Educators felt that students would be more engaged rather than being lectured.

“Through phys-ed I find there are a lot of ways you can bring out a life skill... bringing it out in game and they don’t necessarily know that that’s what they’re

learning... You remember moving and doing an actual activity. That shows a life skill better than if someone were just to write a lesson and talk about it. I feel like your experience make you know it forever.” -Student Teacher

The nature of such game experience would expose students to more social interactions and thereby require the use of certain living skills. The following excerpts highlight how social opportunities and movement through games were advantageous as well as how living skills are learned.

“I think one of the advantages is for sure... having living skills in the health education curriculum is just you can... you’re always interacting with others.” -Student Teacher

“And in health and physical education I think we have such a great opportunity because it’s in everything we do. So, in the gym, in an active situation your learning about yourself and what you can do with your body, you are learning about how to work with other people, your thinking and responding on your feet. You’re learning to adapt and change if something that doesn’t go right.” -Ministry Officer

Major Theme B: Pedagogy

Subtheme i) Student Centered. Educators made it evident that it was important to be on target with the specific needs of the students they were teaching and reflect their teaching towards that. Having a student centered pedagogy would ensure that their teaching would be able to relate to their students and avoid the consequence of students being disconnected from learning living skills.

“Also seeing where they are at. Because you know I may be completely off target and they might not even know what I’m talking about.” -Teacher

“They know that the staff here are very much interested in them and like to think of them as individuals, not just as a class but how are you doing personally.” -Teacher

“I think it’s hard because first of all you need to know your students and you need to know what living skills they all need. They may all come from different kinds of family.” -Student Teacher

- **Knowing Students’ Interests.** In taking a student centered pedagogy, teachers focused on making teaching relevant to the world of their students. They focused on what the current generation of students is interested in and adapt their teaching to it. The following excerpts highlight the focus on the teacher relating to the world of their students and what they are experiencing.

“A lot I think I pull from what’s going on in the world around us... I look at what’s current in the media and what’s the interest of the culture of the students and what’s going on... I try to make it specific to what’s going in their world and in their lives. So I try and keep it real, I try and keep it current, I try and keep it age appropriate and what I think the kids might be interested in and what kind of things they are doing”
–Teacher

Some teachers showed how they incorporated this student-centered pedagogy with the use of personal learner profiles to track students’ progress and learning styles. Even further the following excerpt highlights how teachers can use interests such as technology as a way to engage learners in thinking about living skills.

“I tried this year is conference with our students and actually record it, video tape their answers. So we did that for the very first unit... So they actually had a choice of 2-3 questions they could answer.” -Teacher

- **Student and Observation Feedback.** Other teachers also relied on getting to know their students' interests and needs through feedback from them directly as well as reflecting on classroom observations. In assessing their behavior and interactions with one another teachers can make inferences in regards to what living skills are needed the most and what strengths students have within their class.

“ It's a lot of the approach that we use it is first of all get the feedback about what they do at home and then I get a sense of where were at with all that.” -Teacher 30

“So I guess we look at our student need. I've been trying to do that in my teaching practice. What is our student need right now. Well their not encouraging each other so we need to make that the forefront.” -Teacher

- **Building Trusting Relationships.** The importance of building positive relationship was mentioned in integrating living skills in HPE. To set the context of the next excerpt, this teacher explains how a fellow teacher wanted her class to express their fears about the HPE course they were taking. In doing so, the teacher shows a sense of caring and empathy for student, which set a caring and trusting relationship with students at the beginning of the year.

“The teacher would ask questions to her class. So for example, what is your biggest fear? And although it is not related to health and physical education it sort builds that trust between the teacher and the students and sort of gains that connection.” -Student Teacher

- **Student Choice in Activities.** Educators also mentioned how they included students more in the process of choosing activities and rules to make them a part

of the teaching process. In doing so, strict guidelines no longer limit students but allow them to be more comfortable in the HPE setting.

“So again just sort of breaking down those barriers where some of the girls feel uncomfortable and just letting them be themselves as opposed to giving them strict guidelines to what they want to do.” –Student Teacher

“I think that you know them being involved in the learning process around phys-ed has been very I don’t want to say awakening but its been very beneficial because they’re actually apart of the process now.” –Consultant

Subtheme ii) Explicit Teaching. Another major theme that emerged related to pedagogy was the importance of being explicit in teaching living skills. Educators explained their frustration that explicit teaching of living skills was only happening in activities such as cooperative games and not being done in other components of HPE. Many reiterate that living skills need to be vocalized and talked about during lessons and be a part of lesson objectives.

“It’s kind of viewed as... it’s not viewed as being taught explicitly. I think the only time that it’s really taught explicitly is when you’re doing cooperative games when the focus is on teamwork or communication or something like that.” -Student Teacher 27

“I think that teachers just need to look at when you looking at your expectation it’s always connected to a living skill and it needs to be vocalized it needs to be a part of every single learning goal in a lesson.” -Teacher

“You can use that as a teachable moment in order to educate the kids about a certain life skill. But in phys-ed you are able to create conflict and you’re able to create areas.” Student Teacher

Subtheme iii) Teachable Moments. Some teachers chose to not only use planned activities and strategies but to take advantage of teachable moments to focus on living skills. The following two excerpts give great detail about these teachable moments. The first describes how to create a balance between planned activities and these moment making sure not to force them during a lesson, but let them happen naturally and be observant of when they occur.

“When I am teaching them skills, I’m trying to get them to relate the skills to something else or take it beyond to challenge them. And again like I said it’s finding the balance. It’s finding... having in your mind opportunities you think will be good to apply them, but if it’s not working at the time don’t force it. And when you do see an opportunity that you didn’t bank on then use it. So I think that’s the key is just being observant “ -Teacher

This next excerpts highlights the learning opportunities when incorporating these in practice and taking advantage of them when they occur. This teacher explains teachable moments with his younger HPE class and how they gave him an opportunity to discuss a living skill as they were happening.

“So I do sometimes shut the class down and do teachable moments. So Ok, stop. We’ll come in. I use to when I started teaching the young ones I thought that was a waste of time, but you know what? It isn’t. It is so valuable. It’s as valuable as... I mean it’s not

part of your lesson, but it's still really important. So I shut it down, we come on in here and it takes a little while to cool them down and whatever sort things out, but by that time they're holding hands or hugging each other. So I go through that with him. "So why is punching a person not a good option?" So sometimes I'll waste, waste I mean. I'll use 5, 10 minutes..." -Teacher

Major Theme C: Teaching Philosophy

The following theme presented relates to the philosophies that educators hold within their practice. Teaching philosophy was specifically related to the beliefs and approaches teachers shared as apart of their integration of living skills. Each sub-theme connected to the idea of a holistic philosophy related to the student, the teacher, the environment and the life span.

Subtheme ii) The Holistic Educator. The idea of this holistic philosophy was also expressed related to the role of the teacher. In expressing this a teacher shares that the role of teacher is not only to teach but to take on other forms that counsel and care for students beyond classroom time.

"In the elementary school level your serving as an educator, but your also a counselor, your also like a therapist, you're serving all these different roles because you look at the whole child rather than just having them for a 75 minute period and then sending them on their way." - Student Teacher

Subtheme ii) The Whole Child. Educators also highlighted the importance of seeing the student as the whole-child. In this respect students' learning was affiliated in HPE not just in the physical but also in the cognitive and social emotional areas. Much of the problems mentioned were that teachers are only looking at certain parts of development rather than encompassing all three areas of development. Many also mentioned that they thought the HPE setting was one that was able to touch all three areas of the whole child in comparison to other subject areas.

"I think we got to stop looking at the 10 percent and really look at the whole 100 percent... the whole kid." -Consultant

"The advantages is that physical education you have, you are able to teach the kids physically, emotionally, and cognitively and it's the only subject you are able to do that. I think that these life skills need to be taught in every subject and integrated in every subject." –Student Teacher

Teachers gave examples that illustrated the importance of focusing on the cognitive and emotional/social development through HPE. Living skills were directly connected to these areas of development and key outcomes were associated with students being able to understand and show empathy towards others, build self-esteem and resiliency, critically think and problem solve in situations, as well as improve students' overall mental health. The following excerpts highlight some of these outcomes.

" Just seeing sort of the importance of bringing those living skills so that students can actually understand others. And when I say understand I don't mean you speak... , I understand verbally. Just sort of understanding the person and what they're all about. You just get to know deeper into that person through working on those living skills..."

It's so much and body language and a lot of teamwork. I think one of the advantages is your not making them physically stronger student, but you're making them stronger in the sense that they can understand more the world around them." -Student Teacher

"I mean this is a rich environment to do multiple impact because if you don't have self-esteem, resiliency, if you don't feel good about yourself there's more tendency for failure or not to be motivated." -Public Health Nurse

Subtheme iii) The School Wide Approach. Many educators shared the philosophy that living skills should not be isolated as a part of the teaching practice in HPE, but should be included across curriculum strands, across other subjects and throughout school spaces. This illustrates having a whole school vision that incorporates living skills throughout it. The first key area was in believing that living skills are integrated throughout curriculum and do not stand-alone. A key aspect that was pointed out at the elementary level is that integrated curriculum was used to its full capacity in order for students to cover as much as possible at their grade level and also to create depth in their learning. In doing this, subjects were connected together along with the living skills in order to build connections between each other and present living skills in different contexts.

"If you try to teach everything in the curriculum without integrating you would never get through anything. You would just get the tip of the iceberg in terms of trying to teach everything to the kids in a year." –Teacher

“And from there I’d like to transfer that (living skills) into other subjects. So I started it in the phys-ed setting and get the kids comfortable with it there and then bring it into the classroom like the math classroom the science classroom” -Student teacher 205

“And again were trying to bridge a lot of our curriculum and have a lot interdisciplinary work and let them see the connections and the bridges.” -Teacher

Also, it was important to educators that others see living skills not as a stand alone in the HPE setting, but something that is integrated throughout all three strands. An educator comments on how this perception was held in the previous curriculum document as a stand-alone strand and perhaps wasn’t valued as much because of its position in the curriculum.

“It was like that fourth strand that if you know people were looking at the strands as units, which was never the intent that they would ever be taught as units, they were suppose to be integrated, that people just didn’t get to that or it wasn’t valued as much.” -Ministry Officer

Now, with it’s new position and organization within the elementary curriculum, educators are seeing the need for a more integrated view of living skills that has them engrained across other expectations.

“I mean one of the keys around implementing them is to see that they are not on their own. And to that they are actually engrained or embedded in the other three strands of the curriculum. What’s nice about the living skills is that they create a more... big idea approach to the other strands or gives students the ability to transfer those skills that their living or that their learning in the active living, movement competence and

healthy living applying it to their day to day and thinking outside the gym walls.” –
Consultant

To expand this further from just subjects or expectations, living skills are also being expanded to appear in multiple spaces other than the classroom. The educators in the following excerpts share their own ideas of how life skills are appearing in places such as hallways or the playground and giving opportunities for this learning daily.

“It’s all encompassing it feels right now. It feels like we are trying to infuse it into the school and make it a part. Phys-ed isn’t a separate and neither are learning skills they are all incorporated daily.” -Teacher

“We are trying to make it continuity. The continuity... We aren’t just leaving it. In our hallway we have critical thinking boards... I try to pull questions from the living skills.” -Teacher

Some educators take this further by saying that their opportunities to teach extend into other spaces other than the classroom. In these spaces they are able to use their role to observe and intervene during situations and facilitate moments that connect with learning living skills. In the excerpt below they share this change in teaching space, but one also highlights that the process of talking and discussing with students can follow the same format and uphold a continuity when its done in other areas of the school.

“It’s important because I always feel that ... the living skills are not even specific to subject. It’s everyday, it’s counseling and observing situations you know dealing kids in the hall on the playground or whatever it is.” -Teacher

“The first thing about teaching living skills in a classroom is they enjoy their time in health and phys-ed better ... The second, I have seen it when I go on yard duty and

there is a conflict ... I will go out. If they come to me, then I will speak to them like I am speaking to them in my phys-ed class. What are you going to do? What do you think you should do? What are your options? So, in that way it can be transferred right into the yard.” –Consultant

Subtheme iv) Focus on the Life Span. In talking about living skills, every educator connected it back to having a philosophy that focuses on outcomes across the life span. In this sense, learning life skills was for the purpose of taking them beyond the classroom and into their lives as adults. A key component was focusing on how living skills could help students relate and live in their own world. This perspective saw living skills as a foundational piece to students having a positive experience as they develop and live their life.

“They (living skills) deal a lot with your own sort of self regulation they deal a lot with interacting with other people and you need to understand other people to live in this world...It’s just basically like the base of the ladder for everything else and without those living skills I mean you can still succeed in this world but it just may not be... maybe a better experience for you. It’s sort of the base of the pyramid.” –Student Teacher

A common belief was the importance of transferring learning in the classroom to experiences happening in students’ lives currently. As highlighted in the following excerpts, the focus is not just the objective of teaching on that day, but taking it and applying its meaning later in life.

“My son will do reading and he’ll have to do a write up where he has to say how does this book, the text relate, the text your familiar, the text to yourself and the text to the wider world. So those are the kinds of questions he’s getting so he’s taking that beyond.” -Teacher

“Those are the big life lessons that kids learn and those are what influence them in their life beyond elementary school or beyond the school system...you need to remember to educate this kids beyond your day to day classroom objective.” -Student Teacher

In keeping with this idea of teaching students for life, many had the belief that living skills acted as “tools” that would help them with a variety of situations. In having these tools, students would be able to on their own deal with situations that might occur later in life without the assistance with others, such as their teacher.

“Everything is translatable. The skill you develop in physical activity is translatable into healthy eating, into substance abuse prevention, into relationships and learning how to deal with people. It sets us up for life. We have to deal with life. I mean we are getting the kids ready to... you know tools to work with.” -Public Health Nurse 332

“My hope is that is kids are using learning thinking skills then they will be able to apply them to all those different situations they get themselves in.” Consultant-190

“Yes they are there to have fun, and yes they are there to be active and, but they need to know the why behind that so that hopefully they will carry on with that when you are not there telling them what to do.” Education Officer

Lastly, in carrying on with this theme, many educators focused on teaching for the future. This idea was presented by the expression of caring for students not just in the

present moment, but looking at their life and foreshadowing the skills they will need in life events beyond school.

“It’s so hands-on you’re really creating them, setting them up for success when it comes to the workforce or even I find in post or even post secondary... a lot of teachers they really do care about where these kids are when they graduate.” -Student Teacher

Section 2: Facing Challenges

This next section is composed of the challenges faced by educators. In gathering these responses together, excerpts in this section were directly related to barriers, difficulties or conflicts that arose as part of the integration process that either limited or prevented it entirely. It can be broken down into four major themes that focus on challenges related to educators' knowledge and understanding, conflicting values and teaching philosophies, competitive environments, as well as limited time and access.

Major Theme A: Limited Knowledge & Understanding

Subtheme i) Awareness. Living skills were described as something not everyone knows about or can describe clearly. Many identify different types of living skills, but everyone does not follow a universal way of describing what they are or that they are actually classified and given the name of living skills. This presents a challenge in integration because some teachers don't even know they exist despite its presence in the curriculum and as such it is hard to seek support for something that is unknown.

“People, not everyone understands it, not everyone pays attention to it so looking at that it was like ok how do we use that and help people integrate it better. I think at this point there are aspects to the curriculum that people don't necessarily know they need to know and I think living skills is one part.” Ministry Officer

Even when people understand the terms living skills, there is still an inconsistency between what they look like and where they can be seen. The following excerpt illustrates the challenges with assessment and observation of living skills because of their

abstract nature. There is no one-way of describing each living skill as they can be different between who is viewing them and who is showing them.

“Then I think another issue comes, well I have to mark them on these skills. So not really... just saying how can you necessarily mark someone or give them a grade on something that is so almost abstract. One teacher might view communication in one way while someone might view it in another way.” -Student Teacher

Subtheme ii) Religious and Cultural Differences. Educators also mentioned how not much is known about how living skills are different and similar across religions, cultures and communities. Some found that when students had various backgrounds that they found it difficult to build connections in their class. In the following excerpt an educator shares this difficulty and identified that there is a sensitivity that needs to be considered when teaching multiple groups that perhaps see living skills differently.

“With living skills with stuff like that where you’re, you know there are so many religions and cultures and so on and so forth who are you, it almost gets to the point where who are you to say this to my son or daughter. I don’t know. There is some touchy stuff.” -Teacher

The challenge in this case is trying to figure out what living skills look like for certain groups and being able to deal with addressing multiple students who view living skills differently because of their background.

Subtheme iii) Lack of Qualifications and Background in HPE. Some teachers identified the lack of HPE qualified teachers teaching classes and felt that because of this,

living skills weren't being taught. The frustration in this was that teachers who were generalist would not integrate living skills because they weren't as knowledgeable about it as someone who had a background in HPE. Those with such qualifications would be more likely to integrate living skills because of their familiarity and value of HPE expectations and activities.

“Ya, I think, it's a education piece for not just school, but even at the board level you know for things to trickle down to be able to supply the support or get more teachers involved because in health and physical education there are still teachers that they're putting in these classes that don't have the qualifications to teach health and physical education.” -Teacher

“People who have their education in physical education are going to do that, but if you don't... you don't see the value in doing it.” -Student Teacher

The following excerpts from two student teachers were given when discussing perhaps the reasoning for the lack of education in living skills. They attributed that teachers were not intentionally not teaching living skills, but because of their professional teaching program that did not cover living skills related to HPE, many just do not know about it. One of them goes on to describe that she was never taught to incorporate living skill until she was involved in a service-learning course at her university that directly focused on living skills related to HPE.

“I'd hear teachers talking about phys-ed or in their phys-ed classes and you know it's not by any means it's not their fault, but it's the way that phys-ed has been taught and the way emphasis is put on it.” Teacher

“Maybe they were never shown how to incorporate my life skills into something. That was me first year until I had all these experiences and seeing the success of it so.” -

Student Teacher

Subtheme iv) Confidence and Competence. Many expressed the challenge of having consistent competence between colleagues supporting the integration of living skills. Inconsistencies were said to happen from year to year with changes in teachers and movement of them from different programs. What was clear was that not everyone was on the same page and this created inconsistencies making it hard to ensure that living skills were being delivered in the HPE setting.

“So we need we all have to get those people or whoever it is on the same page, but it’s tough from year to year.” -Teacher

“Not everybody being up to the same level. There’s awareness, but there’s not a feeling of confidence and competency. Some staff yes, but I would not say... we need everybody on board. And we work in different programming areas so some people are focused on other things so it’s not always a priority.” -Public Health Nurse

Major Theme B: Conflicting Teaching Philosophies and Value of HPE

Subtheme i) Fellow Teachers Conflicting Philosophies & Values. Challenges relating to teaching philosophies in HPE were identified. Some teachers spoke about how they had conflicting views with their fellow colleagues making it harder for them to collaborate together and integrate living skills in their HPE program. In the excerpt below a teacher that team-teaches HPE with other specialist at the elementary school level shares this insight to the challenges of conflicting views and beliefs of HPE.

“So my teaching partners. It feels like we have different teaching philosophies in terms of implementing the curriculum and I find resistance to the critical thinking side of PE in terms of... making the living skills more real and dynamic integrated piece of PE.” –Teacher

Some also mentioned that there are teacher groups that see little importance and value in HPE and as such present a major challenge. They felt that not valuing HPE and the living skills would lead to little to no integration at all.

“It (living skills) isn’t going to happen realistically unless you’re someone like myself that has that... foundation that sees the value in it.” -Student Teacher

An interesting perspective is highlighted in the following excerpts on how generalist in HPE might be one of those groups that have different perspectives and values of HPE and as such would have limited belief in the role of living skills in HPE.

“The limitation is the teacher... The generalist teacher looks at phys-ed like “Oh my god they are going to kill each other” instead of “oh my god I can teach them not to kill each other.” -Consultant

Subtheme ii) Valuing Fun and Activity. It was also mentioned that many still hold a traditional view that HPE’s sole objective is to be active and to have fun. Teachers commented that it was a challenge in trying to get others to see the connection of living skills learning in HPE because of this. The following excerpts illustrate this idea of HPE being used as more of a time for recreation rather than opportunities for learning living skills.

“In a lot of teachers eyes it is a 45 minute period where you just go and get active and there’s no real learning going on. It’s just your going and playing and doing activities rather than actually covering the curriculum.” -Student Teacher

“ I got the sense that teachers didn’t necessarily know how, you know? They said this is important, but when people are always talking about the phys-ed curriculum, people see it as running around and being active, they don’t see it as health and physical education the whole picture and the opportunity to teach those skills” -Ministry Officer

In keeping with the theme of the physical, many also highlighted how there still is a focus on just building athletes in HPE. In maintaining this view, challenges are presented in the integration of living skills because others don’t see its connection in HPE setting. Educators explained that some parents and students held this view and as such if they didn’t excel in the HPE setting they were confused as to why. The following excerpts highlights how the focus on the athlete makes HPE outcomes centered on excelling in sports and physical skills rather than developing living skills.

“In my role as consultant, I have a huge challenge trying to put forth that that really is the number one goal of phys-ed. It’s not to create athletes, you know these star athletes that can play basketball and volleyball. It’s about using the time, DPA time as well as the phys-ed time to create relationships with the children. Ya, I like to create opportunities to create living skills.” -Consultant

Students also held the value of HPE for enjoyment and physical activity. In trying to shift this value, some resistance is created by students as they no longer recognize what

HPE is. This was presented as a challenge in gaining successful integrating of living skills because students were resistant to change.

“Maybe another barrier would be the kids going “Well this isn’t phys-ed.” You know sort of the negative feedback. We haven’t had as much this year. Last year was the first real year that they implemented the new curriculum. You know that was challenging in itself... I don’t think they recognize that phys-ed is more than just the physicality it’s the physically thinking, but it’s the physically doing.” -Teacher

In spite of holding this view, living skills were also presented as an opportunity to shift ways of thinking of HPE from just fun and physical. By integrating living skills students would be able to connect deeper into HPE then they have before.

“I think that’s probably the only thing that will get kids to connect to physical education. Otherwise then they just think that they’re just moving and playing a game.” -Student Teacher

Subtheme iii) Balancing the Focus Between Living Skills & Physical Activity.

However, many educators discussed the challenge in teachers holding too much emphasis in their living skills teaching resulting in less enjoyment and activity in HPE. A major way educators said this would happen would be through stopping the flow of class and interrupting movement to analyze and discuss. In doing this, they felt that the focus might be taken away from the opportunities to play, enjoy and be active.

“But kids just love to run and play and so sometimes we just have to be mindful that yes were educating them, but sometimes it’s just about run around, play and don’t be

so analytical and don't stop every 5 seconds and say what did you learn here and how you are working with a team and cooperating, just let them do it." -Teacher

"I feel that colleagues might have that feeling because they... some of them feel strong in terms of physical activity. So, I feel very strongly that our message gets lost amongst all the other messages that we are trying to give out as well." -Public Health Nurse

In finding solution, an educator speaks about balancing the value of physical activity, fun and learning of living skills in HPE. She reflects on pedagogical and planning considerations to keep all three as a focus.

"So the only negative that I can think of is that it does take away time from them in having a heart beat up and being active, but at the same time I think that you can take the 10 minutes to do an activity with a heart rate that is really high and take a few minutes to rest and discuss it." -Student Teacher

Subtheme iv) Changing Views: The Buy Sell Approach. Some educators once they identified differences in values and philosophies, they also spoke to the challenges in trying to change them. Actions taken to change others views in relation to living skills were mentioned through a buy-sell approach. This buy-sell approach is highlighted in the two excerpts below and illustrates this interesting process of changing philosophies and values.

"So I think, for me that it will be a selling point to develop relationships with the schools because I know literacy and numeracy are very strong, the schools that's what they base their success. So, I think it will be a selling point in more physical activity

going in the schools from our end just because they can link it together and incorporate it and children are still learning physical, sorry literacy and numeracy while they're doing physical activity I guess.” -Public Health Nurse

“I stress to people, I show the living skills chart from the H&PE curriculum and then I take the first page of the report card. It has the learning skills on it. Point to the connections and then that's the way I get the buy in for a phys-ed... perfect opportunity. I also always stress that “Hey, and we get to mark them. So I do make it a point but so I try to convert them that way, or get the hook and hook them in that way cause we do spend a lot of time writing our report cards.” -Consultant

The buy-sell idea and language was illustrated frequently by public health nurses and consultants in order for them to create a shift in change to the HPE curriculum in regards to integrating living skills. They also highlight in both situations that they looked to establish existing values and tried to connect living skills to them to create this buy in.

Major Theme C: Competition

Subtheme i) Hierarchy of Curriculum Expectations. Some educators felt that living skills expectations were secondary to other expectations even if they were outline in the curriculum document.

“And they're focused on just providing the curriculum expectations and I feel though that's a life skills a lot of the time become secondary. And although that's even... the life skills are incorporated within the curriculum now, it's kind of given a backseat just in my perspective.” -Student Teacher

The following excerpts all highlight again this challenge of competing with other expectations both in the HPE curriculum and other subject areas. However, the way they describe living skills gives the idea that they are not really considered apart of the curriculum and in fact they are a separate identity. In this respect, it is evident that despite it having place in the curriculum document it is still not seen to be associated with being curriculum.

“First of all, I think I have always done that...integrated living skills in. I’ve really paid way more attention to them than the actual skills always. That’s always been my approach.” –Teacher

“It shouldn’t all be on... you shouldn’t look at phys-ed as just having to teach living skills in phys-ed and then worry about covering just the curriculum the curriculum as it stands in the book in all other subjects.” -Student Teacher

“But I haven’t really seen a lot of teachers focus on that and I don’t... they just kind of just focus on the curriculum and what needs to happen, not getting something extra out of it.” -Student Teacher

Subtheme ii) The Battle with Numeracy and Literacy. Educators identified a form of competition with other subject areas that limited the integration of living skills in HPE. Specifically numeracy and literacy were seen a challenge as they took a higher focus when it came to professional development, instructional and planning time.

“We always talked about on PD days was numeracy literacy and so on so forth, but were at the point now that health and physical education needs some time in regards to this.” -Teacher

“In terms of trying to educate for life skills in a phys-ed setting, that takes a lot of planning. And the problem with the way that phys-ed is taught now teachers are asked to cover so much and physical education isn’t a priority. It’s seen as a secondary subject to the big push is literacy and math and science you know.” -Student Teacher

Some also felt that their had to use literacy and numeracy as ways to legitimize the presence or additional time dedicated to HPE. In adding components of literacy and numeracy to their physical activities some felt that it took away from important physical activity messages they wanted students to learn.

“The physical activity message gets lost trying to do the numeracy and literacy at the same time because there is so much emphasis on them from schools...From our perspective we feel that physical activity should be on the same level as literacy and numeracy, they’re all important. So there’s kind of that kickback from colleagues that is like well should we be mixing the messages, should we just be giving the physical activity message that’s the kind of fear that I have I guess.” -Public Health Nurse 99

“The problem that I see with that is as well it forces the physical education to legitimize itself by piggybacking one of the quote more important subjects. By incorporating literacy into physical education all of a sudden its seen as more legitimate rather than physical education being taught by itself in isolation.” -Student Teacher

An educator illustrated vividly a picture of what outcomes will result from HPE continuing to battle and loose to bigger and more emphasized subjects such as English, Math and Science. In speaking about this, he gives an insightful perspective of where

students might be without HPE and expresses his frustration towards trying to defend the importance of living skills in HPE.

“I know the ministry emphasizes so much around literacy and numeracy that it’s always going to be great that you know as people age that they going to be able to read their pill bottles. And we wonder why our health care is in such a bad state and we are spending millions of dollars is because we don’t emphasis it, we don’t teach the skills that are necessary to live healthy and active for life. I mean focusing in more on that they can read and that they can do math and not to say that those things are not important, but you only get one body and you only get one shot...I just don’t know what the hurdle is. That’s the thing that baffles me. The 50 minutes you give them a day you can reach so many more rewards academically as well as life skills later on in life than that 50 minutes of reading. So, I guess if I was to say a big idea you know teach the whole body, you know teach the whole student.” -Consultant

Major Theme D: Time & Access

Subtheme i) Reading Documents. Another challenge identified was the length of time to read curriculum documents. In this case consultants highlighted that the issue is that some teachers are not reading this material and there are not opportunities for them really to get into the material related to living skills.

“I think that’s where the struggle is... getting the message out there and you know how much of the curriculum is actually being read and put into that’s the other thing.”
-Consultant 86

“Just giving them the tools and awareness on that (living skills) so you know making them read through the document is where we have to start we need more opportunities for teachers to make that happen.” –Consultant

An educator in the following excerpt expresses her frustration when being handed an activity resource for HPE. She expresses how she felt she didn't have enough time to be able to read through the document and be able to choose activities that would be appropriate for her teaching.

“Ok there's a 150 activities who has the time to read each and everyone and see which one is appropriate. That was daunting.” -Public Health Nurse

Subtheme ii) Quality HPE Opportunities. The limited opportunities to participate and be engaged in HPE were seen as challenges in the integration of living skills. In having very few HPE classes within a school cycle not enough opportunities to gain the depth and breadth to explore living skills would be present. In addition since living skills expectations are something that is exclusive to HPE and not other subjects, learning living skills is limited to only the time allocated to HPE.

“I think the drawback is we do have curriculum around that stuff, but because of the, the way the curriculum is being unveiled where classes have it once to five times a week... You know it's variable in how much, how deep you can actually get into it. If you are only seeing your phys-ed teacher once a week you know it's really hard to really get into the communication side of things, in the social skills into the reflecting and all that sort of stuff. When you are only really seeing them once a week.” – Consultant

“If a class only sees there phys-ed teacher or their homeroom teacher doing it I just don’t know if it is going to get the breadth and depth that it needs to in terms of delivering it.” -Consultant

“Like there is so much you're trying to get out of everything because there is so little time that now adding a life skill into it is going to be time-consuming and you might not reach everyone still.” –Student Teacher

Subtheme iii) Political Climates. Those that had a supporting role with teachers felt that political climates that had happened in the past year limited their access to them. This meant that they were unable to give them resources, help facilitate new programs or lessons as well were limited in the amount of time they had to collaborate and work in the HPE setting with teachers. As a result, some found it challenging to integrate living skills as a part of the HPE program in schools because of the restricted access and limitations placed on what teachers would take on from them as part of their HPE program.

“I think the other piece that is impacting us right now is the political climate. We can’t really access our teachers right now. And that’s... we can get into the principal, but the principal says well I can’t do anything because other teachers only do classroom work.” -Public Health Nurse

“Anything that we promote in the schools is not really being taken up on. Previous years we have had a great relationship we’re just assuming that it is related to the political environment going on right now.” -Public Health Nurse

Section 3: Support Systems

This section gives insight into the support systems that are in place to support educators in delivering living skills expectations as part of the HPE curriculum. Excerpts chosen directly relate to multiple forms of support that could be in the form of people, places, documents, professional experiences, access to opportunities and/or programs. In organizing the data four major themes emerged. Support was presented through Communities of Educators, Board Administration and Consultants, Professional Organizations, and Community Programs and Parents. Each theme gives further explanation to how they can support the integration of living skills in HPE between educators and their colleagues.

Major Theme A: Support Between Educators

Subtheme i) Professional Dialogue. Being able to share and connect with other educators was a form of support that was evident in trying to integrate living skills in HPE. Many spoke about how it was important to reach out to fellow colleagues for guidance and support. In understanding further the theme of building a community of educators people emphasized the importance of creating professional dialogue. The following excerpts emphasize creating discussion amongst colleagues related to living skills expectation in hopes to build awareness. In doing this, it will place in motion others to reflect on their own practice and seek further support in this area. It will also help to identify what support is needed and promote further learning in the area.

“My hope is that there will be a discussion created. Like we said at the OPHEA conference with concussions people just have to start talking about it and then that

way we kind of keep going. So people like you who want to share this with other teachers and get them on board to be aware that like you've been doing this along it's just now there's a word to it and you are more aware of it." -Teacher

"So for teachers or educators I think read the front matter of the curriculum, talk to your colleagues about it, encourage your board people to offer workshops on it, offer workshops for each other, because I think if people are having conversations about it they are paying attention to it. It will raise their awareness and will lead to more questions more discussions more learning." -Ministry Officer

Another interesting perspective was using professional dialogue not just to promote living skills, but also to network with educators in different roles and understand their experiences in their own teaching environments. The following excerpts highlight the need to connect people that have various roles in education and have them understand the environments and culture in which they teach so they can better support each other.

"If I could have a sit down with teachers and have a few different teachers around the table and just talk to them and get in the know of what actually goes on in the school because I found out last year fairly quickly when I was started in the schools that there is a lot that goes on in a school that we don't know about." -Public Health Nurse

Lastly, professional dialogue was also centered on students' achievement and needs. A teacher shares how she noticed teachers talking between each other in order to support students in similar ways across different learning environments. In doing this, living skills became consistent between teachers and supported the students positively throughout each class.

“Everyone knows about the target children that need the help. Every teacher knows that because it’s rotary. So whatever class they’re in, they know about that student and what works best for that student.” -Student Teacher

Subtheme ii) Learning Teams. Teachers identified the role of creating discussion and support by creating learning teams within their own school as well as surrounding area. Both teachers in the following excerpts explain how they would create lessons together or activities related to the living skills. This could give the chance for collaboration between teachers and generate ideas that perhaps wouldn’t be thought of on their own.

“Our board has a learning team of elementary and high school teachers, so I think last year we started working through a four part lesson” -Teacher

“Maybe if schools had a PLC (Professional Learning Communities) and they came together they really just created a bunch of activities that could incorporate those life skills...So just for them as a school to come together and say we need to focus on this because this is where their life is going.” -Student Teacher

Subtheme iii) Mentoring

The importance of mentoring was seen as a method of support in the integration of living skills. A student teacher although she felt that you could seek out support she believed that she was supported more by her associate teacher. In sharing her experience, she highlights that she learned a lot from him and the previous experiences he shared with her.

“I actually think there is a lot of support if you asked for it. But at the same time I think the most support I’ve had is probably my associate. My associate was a phys-ed major also and he was able to give me his background on a phys-ed major teaching English incorporating life skills and that kind of stuff into it.” -Student Teacher

The idea of creating a community of educators through professional dialogue, learning teams and mentoring were themes that emerged and were thought to support the integration of living skills in HPE. In this final excerpt, a Ministry Officer shares recommendations for educators struggling to integrate living skills in HPE.

“I think take some time and talk with other colleagues, or mentors, or other the people and just take the time to sit down and think about what you’re teaching and how you are teaching it.” -Education Officer

In being supported through a community of educators, those connected to it will be given opportunities to deeply reflect on their own pedagogy and content as well as its connection to living skills hopefully further enhancing its’ integration into HPE.

Major Theme B: Board & Administrative Support

Subtheme i) Board Consultants. Educators identified the use of consultants as ways they received support in regards to living skills integration in HPE. Consultants held roles that oversee the area of HPE in the elementary and secondary setting for a respective board. They were identified to help teachers by promoting networking between HPE teachers as well as guiding teachers in developing resources and activities in HPE.

“Last year we had him come in and help us with our TLCP process or our Teaching Learning Critical Pathways and trying to implement a learning model for our students and a visual model that integrates living skills.” –Teacher

In this next excerpt, a public health nurse speaks on how consultants provide resources for HPE teachers. The consultants here work together with public health and provide teachers with professional development opportunities.

“We have what we call a professional learning network and so we support the teachers and bring in our resources and one of their consultants leads the teachers in activities around health and phys-ed curriculum.” -Public Health Nurse

To understand deeper into how the consultant supports teachers in HPE, consultants gave their own perspective towards their role of support. Within the following excerpt emerges the idea that support can take on a responsive approach. This meaning that consultants figure out what the needs of teachers are and then support them in relation to that.

“I guess it’s just a responsive approach... It’s more about you know what the teachers’ needs are and then basically going in there and addressing it... It’s more of creating awareness, working with the teachers specifically on what their students need and what they need. Cause I mean I’m there to be responding, responsive to what their needs are. So, as the word of mouth grows and people are aware of it and we’re able to offer maybe specific workshops that are specific around it and learn the learning and living skills...” –Consultant

In being responsive to teachers, consultants also shared that they are able to do what teachers might not get the chance to do and that’s immerse themselves continually

in the curriculum. In doing this, a consultant can act as a guide for teachers in understanding curriculum and its expectations.

“I am in the curriculum pretty much daily. I am connecting with teachers that are doing it. So, it’s pretty advantageous to have a conduit that can point them in the right direction.” -Consultant

Subtheme ii) School Administration. The support of school administration was identified as a form of support. Specifically it was the fact that this group shared a common vision with teachers that made support present. In the next excerpts, administration shows similar objectives in with respect to the role that HPE can play in learning living skills as well as its connection to students and their development. Because of their belief in HPE, educators felt that they were supported in their roles.

“The reason why I am full phys-ed is our administration believed that the living skills and the learning skills and the character education would come through phys-ed. So, we have huge support through admin to allow us to make that the vehicle for our students.” -Teacher

“Our headmaster is very current and recognizes the connection between, he’s really pushing right now the connection between school and family and brining that connection. And that is all interrelated to personal skills, relationships and families and how the school operates” -Teacher

“I want to outline that I have always worked really well with our little phys-ed team actually at the school board and they know the connection between health and phys-

ed. They know it. They get it. I don't have to convince them. They love it.” - Consultant

Major Theme C: Professional Organizations

Subtheme i) Conferences. Some professional organizations were identified in helping support the integration of living skills in HPE. A form of support from professional organizations was in the form of conferences. Some educators highlighted that they provided ways of interacting with educators from various fields and gave access and awareness of various topics that perhaps were new to them or they needed more support in. The following excerpts highlight experiences from both a teacher and public health nurse at a provincial conference held by OPHEA (Ontario Physical Health Education Association) and focus on conferences support for new learning and understanding of living skills.

“I found that the exposure at OPHEA really helped improve that understanding because I thought better how the teachers were applying an abstract concept... how they were integrating it (living skills).” -Public Health Nurse

“At the OPHEA conference was the first time really you know you were getting some support and we were discussing it, nothing at the board level, nothing at the school level here.” -Teacher

Subtheme ii) Documents/ Resources. Educators identified that they use documents from organizations such as OPHEA, PHE (Physical Health Education) Canada and CIRA Ontario (Canadian Intramural Recreation Association) that helped

them in understanding HPE. Specifically some said they found value in lesson plan documents that include key questioning explanations that related back to how to teach certain expectations. As well, they feel that there was an attempt by organizations to create more resources that reflect the changes in curriculum, specifically living skills.

“I think OPHEA’s done a really good job, the OPHEA support, really good job of outlining how you can do it. Like the “how to” and the questioning.” –Consultant
“Physical and Health Education Canada and OPHEA are starting to try and create resources.” -Students Teacher

Some also identified the process of developing supporting documents and material to support curriculum. An expert in the following explains the process of document support as an evolution. In this sense, the new curriculum provides front matter and additional examples that will assist teachers in the integrating of living skills.

“It’s a real evolution in what’s in the document and how it... what support there is for teachers in terms of more stuff in the front matter, but also teacher prompts, sample issues, charts that summarize things etc. Some of that you get a push back from editing sometimes because they want consistency and the people doing the curriculum review say, but the teachers say they want this, or the stakeholders say that this is really important and so there isn’t full consistency from curriculum document to document because they’ve evolve.” -Ministry Officer

Major Theme D: Community

Subthemes i) Community Programs. Some educators said they outsource programs in the community to support their teaching of living skills in HPE. In this

example, a teacher explains how a school relied on external programs that are afterschool to extend their learning beyond school time. In doing this, they gave opportunities to use those living skills in other environments related to students' interests.

“So they have huge support not only from community coming in, different community coming in from playing sports to playing activities, to book clubs, to math clubs doing stuff in the gym with life skills.... So, they have a lot of support and a lot of avenues for students to kind of find what they want and learn at the same time.” –Student Teacher

Subtheme ii) Public Health. Another aspect was the use of public health to support teachers in HPE. Public health nurses shared that they felt they could support teachers in the area of living skills by connecting it to the health content. They however presented that teachers lack the time and as result in order to support them they need to prepare in advance lesson planning so that it can be implemented successfully. By having everything prepared and not making it extra work for teachers, nurses felt they could support teachers in a positive way.

“They are just so busy that it’s hard to balance all that in a school and while they are all important how can we better integrate health into that so it’s not extra work with the teachers because they are beyond busy already.” Public Health Nurse 176

“What we have to do is come in with everything ready. With programs ready that they don’t have to do a lot of work. Here’s something that you can introduce into your curriculum that’s not going to cause huge lesson planning, but that’s going to enhance the work you are already doing.” Public Health Nurse

Subtheme iii) Parents. The roles of parents were important in supporting the integration of living skills, but there was not much explanation as to how. It was however identified that parents need the tools to be able understand living skills in regards to what they are and how they are broken down. They need to be able to make connections with living skills.

“You get into that thing, there just needs to be a whole education piece not just necessarily for the students, but for almost for the parents too. It’s like almost a whole spectrum I guess how you have to start looking at it a little differently. What they need.... It’s needs to be stripped down basically. You know parents have a lot of skills sets, but I think we need to give them more tools to work with and it teaches like we said before connecting the dots.” -Public Health Nurse

Some teachers felt that having parents that understand and accept living skills are a positive for their HPE program. It was also expressed that educators need to work on engaging parents into understanding despite the difficulty and give opportunities to do so.

“I mean first of all you have to have the parents that’s buy in. And obviously you don’t have some parents that are going to buy in and that’s something we as physical educators need to really work on...it is important that we educate the parents. Parent are the ones... once you get those parents onside everything is great.” -Teacher

“We always offer a session for the parents, but that’s difficult. We have to get them, or we have just a few moments sometimes. Or just like hit a few parents. But theirs newsletter inserts, its PA announcements, and policy too. –Public Health Nurse

Major Theme E: Providing Professional Development Sessions

Subtheme i) Showing What Living Skills Look Like in Practice. Professional development was an area that educators felt themselves and others needed from various groups of support discussed above. No matter what type of support they all talked about, educators shared similar ways in which professional development should be delivered from across these groups. The first major focus of these sessions was giving opportunities to see what living skills look like. The idea of being able to “see” living skills was an important skill they felt that needed to be learned in these professional development sessions.

“Help them is just PD sessions just understanding as a phys-ed teacher this new curriculum when it does come out what am I suppose to look for because I think we can all sort of give a definition of what teamwork is, what collaboration is, what cooperation is, but what should I be seeing in my students. How do I know... having some sort of ideas of what I should be seen in my students.” -Student Teacher

In the context of the following excerpt it explains that through the review process prior to the curriculum being developed that groups they spoke to wanted to understand how they looked like relative to the different age groups that they taught.

“Basically people wanted to know how the living skills look different in each of the different strands and at each of the different grade levels so that’s how we came up with putting them at the beginning of every grade and then having a different example for each strand.” -Ministry Officer

Subtheme ii) Engaging In & Experiencing Living Skills. Educators also wanted opportunities through PD to not only see what living skills are, but also how to integrate them in HPE. In achieving this, educators expressed that giving opportunities in PD for participants to actually experience activities themselves and what they would look like in a real teaching setting. The following excerpt details how a consultant used games to illustrate the integration of living skills because she felt that online documents and curriculum were just not enough for the teachers she was supporting to really experience living skills for themselves. In doing this she had more of a connection from teachers to living skills.

“I’m actually going to have one of those games because I don’t think people are looking at the curriculum. Like I have it online for them. I have it on disk for them. I really still don’t think they are realizing them. But if I brought one to life every month I might have more people digging into them and seeing that connection to living skills.” -Consultant

Subtheme iii) Promoting Discussion & Sharing. Much like the idea of professional dialogue that was mentioned earlier, sessions were suggested to incorporate opportunities to discuss and share. The excerpts presented here emphasize that learning how to effectively integrate living skills can’t rely solely on reading through a written document or going to one session alone. It is a process that requires sharing and learning from others in order to improve.

“It’s not like a train the trainer where you just go and learn it. You need to share, you need to talk about and you need to share the examples you are using in your class.

Talk about it what work, what didn’t work.” -Consultant

“But again, in a binder people open and look and I am not a fan of that I’d rather get some face time with people and be able to talk about it a little bit more.” -Teacher

Subtheme iv): Building Living Skills’ Connection to Established Practices & Activities. Another important consideration that educators felt were important in PD sessions was being able to relate living skills to already established content used in HPE. Some educators identified that teachers don’t know how to bridge living skills with current activities that they are using in their teaching.

“I think one of the disadvantages again I don’t understand what you want me to teach. I’m teaching them soccer, I’m teaching them baseball, I’m teaching them basketball. Well how am I you want me to teach possible how my supposed to teach them soccer and cooperation? So just there’ll be a disadvantage there in the traditional view.” - Student Teacher

In this next example, a consultant explains how when creating a PD session for teachers, she emphasized the importance of connecting chosen activities and learning of living skills to those already used by teachers. In doing this she felt that teachers are able to build connections and be engaged in PD.

“That’s why when I am creating this thing I am not going to pull it out of the air. We have already done some stuff previous to it.” –Consultant

Even further, some educators such as the one below emphasized the challenge and need to understand how everything fits together. It emphasizes the importance of bringing multiple components of the HPE together and relating it back to living skills.

“The challenges I had as a public health nurse was understanding how everything fit. Looking at the health curriculum and looking at the strands and trying to and figure out how do we pull these together?” -Public Health Nurse

Chapter 5: Discussion & Conclusion

The focus of this chapter will be to take the results and form them into an interpretation and discussion. This will be organized based on the three major thematic categories that emerged throughout the analysis. Each section will be related back to my research questions and will seek to answer:

- i) What are the experiences of educators in integrating living skills expectations from the new 2010 Health & Physical Education curriculum?
- ii) How do different groups within the education system experience and take a role in the integration of living skills?
- iii) What is the purpose and presence of living skills within the Ontario elementary curriculum for today's youth?

Following my discussion, I will identify the challenges, limitations and strengths in regards to my research as well as highlight the pedagogical implications and future directions for educators and researchers.

Experiences Through Professional Practice

The Integration of Living Skills Through Planning and Instructional Strategies

As stated in the Ontario Health and Physical Education Curriculum, "In order to reach full potential, students need to receive progressive instruction and constructive feedback as well as numerous opportunities to practice, reflect and learn experientially in a safe environment." (Ministry of Ontario, 2010, p.7) In reflection of this, educators shared their experiences in relation to the planning and selection of content that goes into the successful integration of living skills. In this process teachers commented on including a variety of strategies that included debriefs, reflections, explicit questioning,

modeling, scenarios and role-playing. This coincides with Solomon (1997) when she highlights effective strategies for learning living skills in form of character development. In her discussion, one of her suggestions centers on how the educator can deliberately include moral dilemmas that requires students to use key living skills. By incorporating a scenario into an activity in HPE, children are provided with the occasion to: (a) immerse themselves in real situations, and (b) discuss and reflect through meaningful questioning. Solomon (1997) shares that this gives opportunities “to create connections between good character behaviours exhibited in physical education and how that behaviour might be useful in other contexts such as the home, at play, or in the classroom.” (p.41). It is clear that the purpose of such strategies presented in the teachers’ instruction were for the purpose of creating real-life experiences in order for their students to build, create and identify connections between living skills and the outside world around them.

As well, teachers highlighted their experiences in relation to how they considered the organization and selection of activities. In keeping living skills in mind, teachers identified the use of progressions from simple to more complex living skills. They also highlighted creating a foundation in which students could be successful by learning language and terminology related to living skills. In a study done by Martinek et al. (2006) they identify similar considerations for the use of progression and stages in the development of youth leadership through sport and life skills teaching. Their findings illustrated that there were different stages of leadership development amongst the youth and progressing to a more advance stage required completion of the one before. In describing the leadership program, they highlight the importance of building a foundation in order to achieve greater leadership further on in the program. “Although we use sport

as the vehicle for teaching life skills to the club members, empowerment becomes the heart and soul of these clubs. It plants the necessary seeds of confidence for future leadership roles” (Martinek et al., 2006, p. 144). Teachers shared similar insights towards considering progression in their teaching in order to create necessary foundations so that their students could excel in learning more complex living skills.

The Integration of Living Skills Through HPE Activities

To this point, teachers were the major group that gave great detail to how the integration of living skills happens through their experience of professional practice. However, specific areas of professional practice were not mentioned in all cohort groups. Big differences were noticed in regards to the planning and preparation experiences in the integration of living skills. Teachers were the major contributors in describing what strategies they used as well as what games activities made the integration of living skills successful. In contrast to this, public health nurses spoke little of their experiences related to teaching strategies and planning considerations. However, they were very insightful to the use of Health Education in the process of integration as well as their role in being able to create connections to living skills.

In terms of the activities chosen for living skills integration, Health education was an avenue that was really promoted throughout the interviews and discussed with great detail and competence by public health nurses. Public health nurses currently hold the role of being contributors to the improvement of health amongst people as well as act as leaders and advocates in health promotion, disease, injury and disability prevention (Canadian Public Health Association, 2010). In having this expertise, public health nurses felt that they could integrate living skills using opportunities in their health education

programs. In having the capacity to do this, they could act as a vital role in giving opportunities for students to connect to topics, and real situations that they might encounter on a day-to-day basis related to their health. This is especially important in supporting teachers as 53.5% of them in a recent provincial study associated comfort level with health education as a factor affecting confidence in implementing the new HPE curriculum (Manske & Nowaczek, 2011).

Although some teachers did comment on health activities, their choices in activities included a focus on cooperative games and character education. When describing both, not much detail was given on how living skills were integrated specifically amongst them, but focused more on their effectiveness in promoting living skills. Gülay, O., Mirzeoğlu, D., and Çelebi (2010) emphasized that cooperative games have grown in popularity because of their emphasis on social interactions and positive socialization between students. Having this setting provides a cooperative nature that de-emphasizes competition. As well learning through cooperative games can transfer over to other areas of life that can lead to minimizing aggression, increasing positive interactions, and improving self-esteem (Ramsey & Rank, 1997). This research supports the comments made by educators in regards to how using such activities can create more social interactions, further positive development outcomes and give opportunities to use living skills in situations similar to those outside the classroom.

Some educators spoke about how the HPE environment is a unique setting in that it is able to deliver frequent opportunities for social interactions and movement. This is reflective of the curriculum's fundamental principles that "Health and physical education offer a unique opportunity for kinesthetic learning –they learn about healthy, active living

primarily by “doing”, that is, through physical activity.” (Ministry of Education, 2010, p.6). However, what is missing are the experiences teachers have in integrating living skills in other movement forms other than cooperative games such as gymnastics, dance and fitness. In noticing the lack of discussion related specifically to these forms of movement, it is clear that educators recognize their experiences of integrating living skills specifically through activities such as games and health content as well the general movement environment in HPE.

The Integration of Living Skills through Pedagogy

Educators expressed their experience related to having pedagogies that supported the integration of living skills in HPE. Mainly teacher groups shared the importance of pedagogy while public health nurses did not contribute to this experience in their practice. Green (2008) expresses the importance of reflecting on pedagogy when he states, “it is widely accepted, in academic circles, that how young people are taught is as important as what-in terms of content- is taught” (p. 219). In relation to this, teachers shared that taking a student-centered approach that focuses on the learner is important when integrating living skills. In taking on a student-centered focus, teachers and consultants shared that pedagogy should reflect personal interests, student choice in activities, trusting teacher-student relationships as well as frequent communication and feedback of needs from students. Research reflects these same intentions as McCombs, Daniels, and Perry (2008) highlight similar examples of learner centered practices where “teachers include students in educational decision making, respect and encourage their diverse perspectives, adapt to their individual developmental differences, and treat

students as partners in the teaching and learning process” (p.17).

The ability for teachers to center their pedagogy on student interests was one that expressed often and was found valuable in the integration of living skills. The idea of tailoring teaching to be centered on students has been suggested to be effective in creating connections between skills learned in class and students lives. Cutforth and Puckett, (1999) while implementing their service-learning program for youth, focused on creating real opportunities that relate to experiences that youth had. They express that “there should be a connection between school and the world outside” (p.154). In regards to HPE, teachers discussed how their experiences in teaching were built upon working with students’ interests in order to effectively teach living skills and promote its use beyond the classroom.

Teachers also emphasized the importance of using explicit pedagogy as well as teachable moments in integrating living skills in the HPE setting. In discussing explicit pedagogy, some teachers shared that they intentionally designed lessons and taught with living skills in mind. Understanding that living skills have to be intentionally taught and that activities such as those in HPE do not in themselves ensure the learning of living skills is seen throughout research. The study done by Fraser-Thomas et al. (2005) on the role of youth sport programs in fostering positive youth development (PYD) concludes with the statement that “While organized sport has the potential to play a significant role in contributing to youth’s positive development, it is necessary to recognize that PYD through sport is not automatic, but to the contrary, is dependent upon multitude of factors that must be considered when planning and designing youth sport programs.” (p.35) As well, Harris (2005) highlights how there are necessary skills needed for students to be

independent in leading healthy active lives without dependence on their teacher. She emphasizes that “this needs to be taught not relied upon to be caught.” (p.89) Similar viewpoints are shared by Hodge (1989) in his explanation that when considering how living skills are integrated into a sport context, in this case HPE, it is important to hold the perception that life skills need to be taught rather than caught.

Teachers despite having expressed their use of explicit pedagogy also highlight the use of unplanned events in the HPE setting. Teachers commented on using teachable moments as opportunities for students to engage in living skills learning. The experience of using teachable moments was related more directly to conflicts, problems, events that arose unexpectedly from activities in HPE. In having these occur, teachable moments consisted of stopping the activity and engaging students in discussion or reflection of what happened. In doing this, teachers felt that they were able to draw upon living skills being learned in class and have students apply learning in that moment. Whether it was using teachable moments or explicit pedagogy, the focus that teachers had were to create as many opportunities to engage in not only learning living skills, but applying them as well.

The Integration of Living Skills Through a Holistic Teaching Philosophy

In understanding educators’ experiences, the idea of having a philosophy that is holistic was strongly expressed. All cohort groups expressed this need in holding such philosophies in order to be able to integrate living skills in HPE. The four distinct components that encompassed this belief were the child, the school, the educators and the life span.

Educators highlighted the importance of focusing on the whole-child relative to three domains of their development; physical, cognitive and affective. Many mentioned that they felt that educators that had an imbalance in these domains when looking at the development of students were not able to see the value of living skills. The Ministry of Education (2010) outlines that a fundamental principle is that HPE is balanced in that it concerns both physical cognitive needs of students as well as their psychological and social needs. Further statements by Miller (2010) share that “ The aim of whole child education is the development of children and adolescents who can think, feel and act and whose bodies and souls are nourished.” (p.13) This focus on the mind, body and spirit is directly reflective of this comprehensive approach that educators believed were needed in infusing living skills into daily practice in HPE.

The idea of believing in the integration of living skills not only in the HPE setting, but also through a school-wide approach, was deemed important by educators. In taking this perspective, educators shared the importance of fostering relationships with other subjects and disciplines building integrated curriculum opportunities that would enhance the chances for students to apply living skills in other settings. (Petersen, 2008) gives insight to the process of creating change in regards to beginning a life skills program in a school by stating that “A systematic change can be realized only when an entire school makes a commitment...By choosing a school wide approach, a school has the benefit of teamwork from all staff, plus parents, and community members.” (p. 3). Educators agreed with this position by sharing that living skills are not just limited to HPE, but can be taught and found within multiple subjects, a variety of spaces either within or outside

the school environment, as well as integrated by multiple people that have a significant role in students' lives.

Educators shared having a philosophy that focuses on seeing students develop beyond the present moment and across the life span. Their focus was to create opportunities that help them gain the tools necessary to lead positive futures that extended beyond the context of HPE. Danish (2002) supports this same notion in the context of sport, in that it can serve as a way for children and youth to learn values and skills that would help them prepare for the rest of their lives. Specifically, successful transitions into adulthood amongst young people happen when essential components like living skills are present (Jones, 2005). It is clear that in integrating living skills, educators have to see development not just in the here and now of the context of HPE, but have to extend their view of living skills in that it will help children deal effectively with the challenges and changes in their lives to come.

The idea of a holistic educator was commented on by one student teacher and revealed the philosophy that the role of the teacher extends beyond that of which they are defined. The teacher takes on many forms outside of the scope of teaching such as a parental figure, role model, counselor etc. In this sense, the holistic teacher takes on many roles that support their students in multiple ways. In comparing this notion with the literature, there is a different perspective of what is attributed with being a holistic educator. Miller (2010) describes the presence of the whole teacher in delivering whole-child education. In his explanation, he expresses the importance of having whole teachers is not for the fact they take on multiple roles, but for the characteristics of patience, presence, caring, love and humility in their practice and for themselves. Whole teachers

are “teachers who care for their own bodies, minds, and spirits. They work on themselves so that they can be more whole.” (Miller, 2010, p.13) In perhaps understanding this different view, we can see the value of the holistic educator is one that has multiple identities but also takes time to focus on oneself in order to support students further in theirs.

Support Systems: Different Roles Involved in the Integration of Living Skills

The following section discusses the support systems in place that help in the integration of living skills in the HPE environment. Educators mentioned a variety of roles that they take as well as identified other individuals that support them. It is important to note that although participant groups at times mentioned different ways that they receive support, all of them fell under similar categories relative to the following support groups; fellow educators, board and administration, community and professional organizations. Similar groups are identified in the 2011 provincial study by Manske and Nowaczek (2011) where Ontario HPE teachers indicated that their most important sources for support were professional organizations such as OPHEA, other teachers, consultants, community partners, public health and principals. Fullan (2007) also illustrates these same support groups in his interactive factors affecting curriculum implementation. In describing this, he speaks about support related to local characteristics of districts, communities, principals, and teachers as well as external factors related to other professional agencies. Further characteristics of these support systems will be discussed in depth and reveal their importance to the integration of living skills in HPE.

Supporting Each Other: Experiencing Professional Dialogues and Mentorship

Support from other colleagues within the profession was identified from all participants in order to integrate living skills more effectively. All participants shared this in the form of creating professional dialogue between themselves and other educators. This professional dialogue was seen as an important part for allowing the exchange of ideas, experiences and strategies that would develop their professional practice. This is very important as “New meanings, new behaviours, new skills and new beliefs depend significantly on whether teachers are working as isolated individuals or exchanging ideas, support and positive feelings about their work” (Fullan, 2007, p. 97). As well, professional communities focus on the importance of peer relationships and interactions with others as a means of learning to do something new, in this case that being the integration of living skills. With this understanding, educators experiencing discussions and interactions related to their professional practice are able to feel supported in the actions and changes they are making to integrate living skills.

What was also interesting was that student teachers identified the importance of professional dialogue through having mentors in their in-service teacher programs. This expression of mentorship is highlighted by Capel (2005) as she discusses how it can be a preventive force from new teachers being “washed out” of the practices and perspectives from their initial teacher education programs. Protecting new teachers from what she calls “conservative elements” within their schools can drive new practices related to HPE that could have significant contributions to student learning. As well, mentoring programs assist in promoting successful transitions of educators into new environments, enhancing performance in the classroom, boosting positive morale, increasing

communication and retaining quality educators. It is in mentoring that we can give back to the profession and make significant impacts in another's professional life (Ermler, Mehrhof, Brewer, & Worrell, 2007). In relation to the integration process, it is important that those that are just grasping the components of living skills in HPE, especially those beginning teachers, be mentored and supported in ways where they can flourish in their practice. The role of the educator is evidently a way in which we can issue support, guidance and reflection through dialogue.

Recognizing Support Through Leadership Roles of Consultants and Principals

Board and administrative support from consultants and principals was identified as ways educators acted as, or experienced support. In understanding the consultant role, teachers identified accessing HPE consultants for support in curriculum implementation as well as for guidance in program development and resources. This coincides with the findings from the 2011 provincial study where consultants were ranked the fourth most important source of support with 62.9% of teachers identifying using their board consultant at some point in their process of implementation (Manske & Nowaczek, 2011). Consultant participants recognized their role in this process, and supported educators' comments in regards to their responsibility in providing guidance and support. What was interesting was consultants shared that they took on a responsive approach in dealing with the needs of those in their board. This meant that they based their support on the needs brought forward by educators and then attempted to address them using their expertise and understanding. However, literature suggests that a majority of teachers, despite identifying multiple sources of support as described in this section, 70% of them

don't actually make contact with any of them. Even further, 91% of teachers from that same provincial study indicated that they only sometimes or never contact their school board for support in H&PE (Manske & Nowaczek, 2011). This might suggest that support in this role has to be proactive with consultants making the attempt to approach educators and find out what their needs are.

Principals were another group identified as a system of support by both teachers and consultants. The importance of the administrative role of principals as a source of support was identified by 46.5 % of HPE (Manske & Nowaczek, 2011). In understanding the importance of their role, Fullan (2007) states that “principals actions serve to legitimate whether a change (in this case living skills learning in HPE) is to be taken seriously and to support teachers both psychologically and with resources” (p.95). A principal's leadership role acts as a crucial aspect into the implementation of curriculum such as quality physical education (Ermler et al., 2007).

Specifically, consultants and teachers recognized the supportive role of those principals who held common visions related to HPE. Having this mutual understanding for its importance, and in an even greater sense its purpose for the positive development of students, allowed for successful integration of living skills in their practice. A key ingredient that needs to be emphasized is that both groups, those receiving support and those administrators supporting, shared the same perspectives related to living skills and its place in HPE. Currently, awareness amongst principals is relatively low in regards to HPE curriculum as two thirds of principals reported that they are somewhat familiar or unfamiliar with it (Manske & Nowaczek, 2011). Lack of familiarity amongst principals can issue barriers in the integration process, as they are not aware of its role and presence

and might not hold the same priorities for HPE as those that teach it. Ermler et al. (2007) suggests that educators must not make the assumption that their administration knows and understands health and physical education curriculum and their teaching methods. Rather, they should provide understanding and advocacy for their practice by educating and connecting with administrators on a regular basis. It is when these common visions and priorities are in line with each other that support can take place effectively.

Community Collaboration: The Role of Professional Organizations, Public Health and Parents.

The final areas of support teachers identified were through professional organizations as well as key areas in their community. All groups identified that conferences held by professional organization helped to expand their understanding and practice of living skills. It gave them opportunities to connect with experts and other teachers seeing different ways to incorporate new teaching practice in HPE. Fullan (2007) identifies the importance of accessing this outer dimension of support beyond that of the school in saying that “as teachers work more and more with people beyond their own schools, a whole gamut of new skills, relationships, and orientations will fundamentally change the essence of their profession.” (p. 297). As well, professional organizations are recognizing their roles and are making efforts to better serve educators by developing service delivery considerations for new curriculum such as those discovered as part of the OPHEA HPE baseline study in 2011. It is clear that professional organizations have the opportunity to have an impacting role in the integration of living

skills by giving educators opportunities to be supported through valuable networking and professional development that are rooted in effective delivery.

Forms of community support were established through community programs, local public health representatives and parents. What was interesting in understanding community support was that public health nurses were the only ones to mention support from public health. All nurses shared that their involvement with HPE usually involved them approaching teachers and presenting already prepared resources rather than teachers coming to them. This one-way direction of support is interesting as the provincial study indicated that 62.9% of teachers considered public health as an important source of support in their implementation of new HPE curriculum, ranking it third compared to other supports (Manske & Nowaczek, 2011). There is evidence that public health is valued as an important source for implementation of HPE expectations outlined, especially in regards to health related content. However initiation of this support more than likely must come from public health representatives initially as educators may not make contact first.

Support in the community extended to parents and was expressed as a positive contribution from teachers in integrating living skills as part of student learning in HPE. The Ministry of Ontario (2010) outlines that parents have an important role in their students learning in the Health and Physical Education Curriculum. It shares that parent engagement has outcomes that benefits students' performance and enhances their appreciation of content being taught. Since parents are primary educators for children, they act as role models and as such, it is important for them to work together with schools to ensure that home and school are mutually supportive of each other (Ministry of

Education, 2010). This supportive relationship is illustrated by Coleman (as cited by Fullan, 2007) as part of his “power of three” concept related to school improvement. The power of three considers the process of parent, student, and teacher collaboration and emphasizes that student success can be maintained and strengthened because of its presence. It is this supportive relationship between educators and the parents of those they teach that can promote the learning and integration of living skill in the HPE.

To conclude this section, it is important to recognize that support in integrating living skills comes from a variety of people and places. As well, sometimes educators might know what types of support are present and available, but it might be up to those in those supportive roles to initiate the support. It is important to recognize the place of support and avoid thinking that they each work independently from each other. In fact, they are all part of a system that is dynamic and can have significant influence on curriculum implementation (Fullan, 2007). Ermler et al. (2007) emphasizes the importance of considering all these support systems together in HPE and their importance with one another by expressing that:

Quality Physical Education programs are not created in isolation. The popular quote “ it takes a whole village to raise a child” is relevant to physical education in that it requires the support of numerous people. In order to create a quality physical education program, physical educators must enlist the support of school administration, fellow teachers, parents, students and community members. (p.49)

It is clear that there are many roles that need to be filled in order to provide supportive and successful experience for educators in integrating living skills.

Support Through Effective Professional Development

Educators described the support they received from different roles within the educational community. In addition, they also gave the essential characteristics that professional development (PD) sessions for living skills would need to include in order to be effective from these support groups. The first aspect needed in PD is to design sessions so that they give opportunities for participants to see what living skills look like and how they are experienced. Giving opportunities for educators to participate and engage in living skills learning was considered vital because they would then be able to relate to what they were teaching and have examples of what they would look like in their practice. Adults need to be presented living skills in the same ways we would teach children them; through active environments and meaningful activities. In the study by Cutforth and Puckett (1999) they used physical activity as a setting to engage youth in living skills learning because of its capacity to learn through doing, serving and reflecting on the experiences they were having. In the same way, educators found it important that PD sessions be designed in this way rather than taking a passive form such as reading a document or sitting in a lecture style session.

Another important component of PD was reflection and meaningful discussion through partnerships between those participating. In similarity to the points that were discussed in relation to strategies used by educators to teach living skills to children, reflections and debriefs can be used with adult participants as a way for them to connect learning to a situation or context that they might experience back in their own practice. This would encourage them to see the use of living skills in how it applies to them and the students they work with. Capel (2005) shares that “there seems to one requirement for

physical education teachers to be able to develop their pedagogy; reflection.” (p.121). As well, this reflection should not stop after initial teachers training, but should be a continual element in professional practice. Gibbs (2007) shares similar suggestions when she talks about the importance yet challenge of reflective practice as part of professional growth. She states that;

Such professional growth does not happen simply in “now and then” in in-service education, but through sustained on-site peer dialogue and support. Expecting teachers to alter their traditional teacher-talk approach and move to active group learning is a big challenge...Schools that do well in sustaining the responsive process for student achievement are those that schedule regular weekly study groups for teachers to think, share and work together as reflective practitioners. (p.204)

There definitely needs to be opportunities for educators to become reflective practitioners in order to grow and develop in their understanding of living skills and its application in the HPE environment.

PD can be offered by multiple roles as established previously in our discussion of support. This can be through community organizations, consultants, fellow colleagues, administration etc. However it is important, that PD in this area is not limited to teachers, but should be expanded to all those that have a role in the integration process. As well, there should be sufficient access for educators to seek this support. PD can be a lifeline needed for those educators in HPE who want to remain current with strategies and topics, but often school’s budgets for attending them are minimal and are directed more towards subject areas where high stakes testing occurs (Ermler et al., 2007). It is therefore

important to recognize the power of PD and make it happen so that educators can be more successful and confident in their practice within HPE.

Facing Challenges: Roadblocks to Successful Integration

Throughout educators' experiences they shared multiple ways in which they effectively integrated living skills into HPE. They identified support systems that are in place to guide, educate and help them become better in achieving living skills learning in their classes. However, the road to integration was not described as an easy one as educators confronted barriers and challenges frequently. This section details the issues expressed by educators that halted their progress in effectively integrating living skills. By doing this, we are able to identify what types of things would have to change in order for living skills to flourish in HPE and beyond.

I do Not Know What I don't know: A Need for Change in Awareness, Confidence & Competence

An issue that limits the integration of living skills across all HPE classes is the lack of awareness for what living skills are and how they fit into the HPE environment. All educator groups expressed difficulties when others in their field didn't know about them or even how to go about teaching them. However they did recognize that it was not ignorance, but just simply lack of knowledge of what they did not know. Haydon (2010) reiterates that social and personal education is not well recognized by its terminology and that there are different meanings for it. Such vocabulary discussed in this literature is very different from that of "living skills" used in the HPE curriculum and suggests that perhaps the concept of living skills are recognized in different forms of vocabulary depending on the individual and the location of their educational practice.

Sometimes the case that was presented was that the educator knew what living skills were and their importance however, they didn't know how to integrate it in their teaching. The understanding of "how" to integrate was something concerning to educators as they felt that those in their profession struggled with this, especially if they were new to the concept of living skills. McCallister et al. (2000) found as part of their study involving sport coaches that although the coaches expressed that they were successful in teaching values to children they could not specifically describe how they went about teaching them. The philosophies that they held conflicted with the actions and behaviours as coaches. In understanding this, educators might understand what living skills are and their importance for student learning, but their lack of knowledge and articulation of what it looks like in practice might hinder its integration in the HPE setting.

Even further, teachers and public health nurses expressed the difficulty with understanding living skills from a cultural lens. They brought up that living skills can be culturally different for specific groups of students and that tensions might arise if living skills taught in class don't reflect those at home. Danish (2002) reiterates the diversity that living skills can take by sharing that they can consist of one thing for one person and something completely different for another. Living skills are then very different between students and as such it can be difficult to know what living skills will look like for all students. In being challenged by this, Haydon (2010) suggests that educators need to be aware of the plural society they live in and not to hide their students' diversity of the value positions they hold based on their background. However, he does identify that there can be difficulty in trying to separate social and personal education from moral

education that could be deeply rooted in a students religious and cultural values.

Understand what living skills look like and knowing how different groups value them is an important consideration and can be a difficult task when trying to integrate living skills among a diverse group of students.

In understanding why challenges such as a lack of knowledge are present educators mentioned issues related to HPE qualifications as well as confidence and competency. Teachers expressed that there are a limited number of teachers that are specialized in HPE at the elementary level and as such, might not have the depth in their knowledge and practice to integrate living skills in ways that specialists could. The provincial baseline study done by Manske and Nowaczek (2011) shares this same concern as they reported the factors affecting confidence in implementing HPE curriculum. Of the teachers surveyed, 31.4% associated confidence related to qualifications and training in HPE. As well, 40% reported having no training related to physical education and 25% having no training in health education. The lack of HPE specialist at the elementary level is not new. Green (2008) shares that most secondary schools have at least one member on staff with a specialist qualifications, however primary schools have only some, and most are taught by teachers with limited training. This is concerning as all teachers play an important role in the health and wellness of their students at the elementary level. Therefore it is important to recognize that in order for living skills to make an impact with children and youth, not only in one school but multiple schools across the province, it is important that there is a widespread awareness and competency between all educators responsible for HPE.

Seeing Eye to Eye: Changing the Traditional Views and Practices in HPE

The idea of what HPE is and its role can vary between educators, and as such different philosophies and views of HPE are established, but not all hold positive outcomes. In reflecting back on the challenges of the limited competency and understanding of living skills in HPE, stereotypical views that are negative can begin to form. Ermler et al. (2007) highlights similar insights to those educators that spoke about how they struggled in implementing living skills because their philosophies and images of HPE were drastically different then those of their colleagues. She illustrates that:

Classroom teachers and school officials must be shown how the physical education program contributes to the overall school environment. Without sufficient knowledge about what is considered a quality PE program, they are left to their imagination. The vividness of being hit in the face playing dodgeball may be the only image some colleagues still have of physical education... A tarnished image needs polishing (p.57).

Teachers and consultants shared that they struggled when their philosophies didn't match up with traditional ones still held by those around them. Even though living skills for educators were identified as essential to the HPE curriculum and as part of the curriculum document, they still felt resistance from others in using them in their practice. Hargreaves and Sparkes (as cited by Capel, 2005) explained that one reason for the lack of change in teaching physical education is a result of teachers' values and beliefs being incompatible with that change. Jin (2013) after interviewing physical education teachers about their understanding, interpretations, perceptions and responses to curriculum reform identified this incompatibility as teachers expressed that they had intent to honour their obligations

to new curriculum, but aspects of it countered their teaching beliefs. Conflicting philosophies between educators can evidently present a problem as they might limit whether living skills are even taught or valued in HPE. It is important to recognize this challenge and consider that there needs to be common philosophies between educators as well as mutual beliefs of living skills in HPE in order for integration to be successful.

The image of HPE is not just represented by educators, but can stem from the community and greater society. Teachers and consultants shared the challenge that traditional images of HPE shadow over held concepts of the role of HPE in addressing physical, affective and cognitive domains of a child's development. A prominent example that was frequently identified was HPE's focus on sport, athletes and time to play. With others viewing this environment as athlete building, sports exclusive and play oriented, it was felt that HPE could only be seen for its purpose for physical development rather than its social, emotional and cognitive aspects so exclusive to living skills. Much of the same feelings of difficulty by educators in HPE are expressed by Hardman and Marshall (2005) as they describe the physical education in the European context. Some of the comments collected from physical educators across Europe expressed that physical education is seen as a way for students to let steam off before academic intensive work, to play during time off from other subjects or to engage in leisure or recreation sessions. Also, a coaching and athlete focus can sometimes be mixed with HPE because many of those that teach HPE, especially at the middle and high school level hold a coaching role amongst sports teams within their schools (Ermler et al., 2007). As educators expressed, traditional views of just the physical aspects of HPE make it hard for living skills to find a place. However, educators did express the caution in overemphasizing living skills to

the point where physical aspects of HPE are forgotten. There were several discussions where educators, especially public health nurses, were afraid that if living skills were too much of a focus, time would be lost in students' engagement in physical activity.

Papacharisis et al. (2005) settles fears about this by explaining "when life-skills training is appropriately embedded in sport or physical-education practice, their learning is not at the expense of learning sport and fitness skills. On the contrary, students can improve their performance by applying the life skills they are taught." (p.8) In this respect, all areas of development; physical, affective and cognitive, need to be balanced and present in the image of HPE. If stereotypical images, traditional views and conflicting philosophies about HPE remain educators will have to continue to leap over hurdles in order to integrate living successfully.

The Need to Compete: Changing the Hierarchy and Status of Subjects

The need to compete against other curriculum subject areas was identified by teachers and consultants as an ongoing issue preventing educators from giving quality opportunities for students to engage in living skills learning. Specifically educators expressed that sometimes HPE itself had an inferior position to that of other more dominant subjects. This exact same problem is presented as an underlying issue in physical education. Hardman and Marshall (2005) identify that although physical education is placed along side other subjects such as language and math, it is allocated less time and hence given lower status. Gowrie (as cited by Hardman & Marshall, 2005) shares an illustration that "there is a hierarchal pecking order of subjects with physical education occupying a lower position on the academic totem pole." (p.46). All educators

interviewed shared this hierarchy in relation to literacy and numeracy. They spoke strongly on how the main focus of language and math skills, in addition to the high-stakes standardized testing associated with it, creates no room for HPE in education. In trying to figure out why HPE wasn't being more successful in engaging young people in taking on healthy active lives, a review of literature by Capel (2005) considers one possible contribution. The competition of PE with core subject areas such as numeracy and literacy can limit time allocated as well as make it irrelevant in times where other subjects are in need of high priority. Another issue is that often at times living skills as part of HPE are not considered an academic worthy subject. Haydon (2010) informs us that "it is open to dispute whether what it labels (that being personal and social education such as living skills) is a curriculum subject at all, as opposed to an aspect of education or kind of education aim." (p.503). It is clear that there is a competitive presence that is driving HPE to the back of pack and limiting its involvement and presence in the school community. Changes related to how we prioritize and value subjects over one another are indeed needed to be challenged for integration of living skills to have a fighting chance.

Timing Is Everything: Changing Access and Time for HPE

The last major challenge that was identified was the issue of time and access. Consultants and public health shared this challenge as they highlighted the difficulties in accessing teachers to support them as well as the limited time teachers dedicated themselves in reading and immersing themselves in the curriculum. In regards to time spent on curriculum, consultants felt that the teachers in their boards weren't motivated to read documents and didn't necessarily have time to reach the depth they needed to

understand it. Ontario HPE teachers surveyed supported this as 71.7% of them associated the time to review curriculum as factor affecting their confidence in implementation. In addition, gaining access to support teachers was difficult at times for both consultants and nurses because of external factors such as political climates. During the time of the interviews, Ontario teacher contract negotiations were in the midst of being settled and as result some political tensions arose. Consultants and nurses shared briefly that issues related to this made accessing teachers directly more difficult as well created limited interests in teachers participating in professional development or programs facilitated by them in regards to HPE. Fullan (2007) identifies that external factors such a governments and political driven issues such as these can have a debilitating role in the implementation process. In this case, it is important to identify that the integration of living skills can be challenged by external factors such a government agendas and political issues as well as the lack of time teachers have to immerse themselves fully into curriculum.

Suggestions for Professional Practice

This study has revealed many insights from the experiences of educators into how living skills are integrated in the HPE setting. What is important now is to take these experiences and provide practical suggestions that will ensure that positive and effective integration will happen amongst our schools and that support is in place to sustain its presence.

In understanding educators' professional practices, it is clear that those looking to develop their pedagogy must reflect on whether it coincides with philosophies that support living skills learning. In this respect, it is important that educators reflect and

consider how their practice reflects the whole-child and their development in physical, affective, and cognitive dimensions. As well, educators must thoughtfully plan and prepare lessons in HPE that create opportunities for children to engage in and practice living skills. This means reflecting on what living skills will be chosen, how they are learned through that activity and how they are relevant to the specific group of students. Although educators can take advantage of teachable moments that present themselves, it is the explicit teaching of living skills that will ensure there are opportunities for learning, engagement and application. Most importantly, content, activities, and teaching methods must reflect the unique world of the students being taught in order that they make real-life connections to situations in class to their outside world. It is important that living skills are not only present in the HPE environment, but across the context of the whole school so that students opportunities to learn living skills are capitalized and transferable between settings.

Many educators shared their frustrations with the challenges in integration living skills as part of their HPE program. In doing so they revealed issues that we in the field of education, no matter what our positions, need to understand and provide solutions to. A primary example laid out was the lack of knowledge and awareness for living skills. It is important as educators that we are competent and confident in all areas of the curriculum and take initiative in seeking support when we need help. It is essential that we provide more professional development opportunities and resources that are meaningful in delivery and have application across multiple HPE settings in order to educators to thrive in their teaching. It is suggested that in creating continuous dialogue and conversations with educators across the province that we can be advocates in sharing

the positive outcomes that HPE can have for the development of children and youth. In doing this, perhaps we can breakdown the once traditional views and philosophies of physical education and form new ones that support the presence of living skills.

Finally, support needs to be established in a variety of ways. Educators need to be encouraged to network and connect with other professionals to build a professional reflection that will help them improve their practice and understanding of living skills. Such ways could include creating HPE learning teams, developing mentorship programs or creating networking sessions or groups to discuss and share ideas about living skills. Professional organizations looking to work with HPE educators should ensure that resources and programs are up to date and reflect curriculum expectations such as living skills. By doing this, they will be able to support educators and give them the necessary tools in order to be successful. Educators should also establish a good connection with their board consultants and express the needs and challenges they are facing in regards to their HPE program. This way their consultant can provide them with the necessary support and resources to carry out their HPE programs effectively. Lastly, leadership roles at the board and administrative level need to be nurtured and common visions shared. We need to have principals, trustees, and superintendents from all levels that believe and trust that the HPE environment is one that can instill learning of living skills. This can only be done if HPE educators remain advocates for it.

It is however important to recognize that these suggestions are simply that. In our own cases we will find that certain things work and others do not and we should keep this in mind when reflecting on our own teaching relate to the context of our practice. Hellison (1985) shares that there is not a “cookbook” that details the best strategies to use

when teaching. In considering this, educators must find the practices and solutions that work best for them and their situations to further enhance their HPE programs and the integrating of living skills.

Future Research

The results and findings from this study have revealed many insights about the process of curriculum implementation in regards to integrating living skills in the HPE context. However, it has also raised new questions and perhaps new avenues of research to be explored. One area of interests is to explore how living skills differ between personal backgrounds such as culture, ethnicity, religion or gender. This could also included understanding further how socio-economic status relates to the different living skills needed by students as well as their experiences relative to the environment around them. Discovering similarities and, or differences might give insights to how living skills look for different students and give way to how living skills can be learned by a diversity of children and youth.

It became clear throughout the study that there was limited description from educators on how the process of learning living skills actually takes place. Research related to students perspective on how they learn living skills and how they perceive them would perhaps enhance our knowledge of effective strategies and teaching methods for today's generation of youth. Also tracking the development of learning skills over a longitudinal study might give valuable information to how living skills develop over the course of a child's development and illustrate more in depth what living skills and outcomes look like at these developmental stages.

Even further, research related to assessment of living skills is needed so that we can understand techniques on how to identify and evaluate the progress of students. Further studies could include exploring and creating assessment tools for multiple physical activity settings such as HPE, sports camps, intramurals etc. Research also needs to include looking deeper into support systems that help in implementing new curriculum such as exploring the characteristic of good support and effective professional development. It would also be beneficial to do further research by narrowing in on teachers with limited HPE experiences as well as beginning teachers and look at the process and programs necessary for them to become proficient in living skills teaching.

Limitations & Future Directions

Despite not having a large amount of participants and being limited on whom I was able to contact and recruit, I was able to get a variety of educators that represented different roles in the HPE setting. In doing this, I was able to share the perspectives of educators from public, private, catholic institutions in both elementary and secondary levels. With a smaller selection of participants I was really able to create depth in my interviews and provide rich and detailed information of integration experiences.

In having limited access in whom I was able to recruit, I was unable to gain access to principals and more administrative positions that might have provided more insight to this group of individuals. Also, the participants that were recruited from conferences and from previous contacts all had extensive health and physical education background. Thereby, many had extensive experiences in the HPE setting and held specialists roles, which limited the insight given into how generalist teachers in HPE experience integration of living skills. Limited access also restricted my research in being

able to observe the school settings of educators. As such, I was unable to see for myself what educators experienced as well as their interactions with others that might have provided me with more insight to the integration of living skills. With the added political climate that emerged this past year as a result of contract negotiations I found willingness to participate in my study limited. Many of those that were effected by this chose not to participate in other activities that were not mandatory responsibilities outlined as part of their job description and as such research participation was weaker than expected. This was evident as even after having research approval from a board, access and the ability to communicate or get into contact with educators from any level was very difficult.

It is important to note that these experiences highlight some and may not highlight all the experiences educators have in integration of living skills. In being able to take the findings from this research and relate it to further considerations for professional practice it is essential to comprehend that we can confidently generalize when settings, people, outcomes and times are similar to those of the original research (Patton, 2002) In keeping this in mind it is important to be open to the idea that the experiences shared as part of this research will have similarities to other educators in Ontario, but may have significant differences. Despite knowing that findings might not connect in the same way with another group of educators, I still strongly believe that other educators will be able to see themselves in some way within the experiences shared as part of this research.

Conclusion

The objective of this study was to understand the experiences of educators in integrating living skills as it happens in the context of HPE. In sharing their experiences, educators let me step into their world through various dimensions one of which was their

experiences through their ideas of professional practices, which included their strategies, pedagogies and teaching philosophies. They also embraced their own unique roles and talked about the supportive elements that help them and their fellow colleagues succeed along the way. Educators were not afraid to voice their concerns about the challenges and the difficulties they encountered and the importance they had for the future of HPE in the lives of their students. In this dialogue with each other, they provided considerable information and suggestions that will help guide the practices of their fellow educators so that they may understand and see living skills more clearly and with in a new frame of mind.

As an educator myself with a long career ahead of me, I still have a lot to learn in my professional practice, but the learning that has stemmed from this research has been a good sprinting start. What is important is that we take what these findings have shown and put them to good use by applying them to our own professional practice and share them with others. Far too often we get too comfortable in our teaching that we fail to embrace new innovations, concepts and strategies to further enhance our teaching and ultimately the learning of our students.

If there were an overall message that could come from the things that all these educators shared it would be that it is important to keep HPE real and relevant to students. As they described their teaching strategies, pedagogies and philosophies, time and time again they would always go back to the idea that living skills are what students need to succeed in real-life. They are powerful tools that need to be presented in real ways to children through meaningful activities so that they can take them and carry them on beyond the walls of a gym, class or playground. The findings in this study support

how the context of health and physical education can be a platform to provide these real experiences for children to practice the essential living skills needed in order for them to be successful today, tomorrow and into the future. It is however essential that we recognize the true barriers that limit educators in reaching this and develop appropriate supports to take integration of living skills even further.

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Appendix A: The Living Skill Expectations: K-8 Ontario Health & Physical Education Curriculum (2010)

Living Skills		
Personal Skills	Interpersonal Skills	Critical and Creative Thinking
<p>Self-awareness and Self-monitoring Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a realistic understanding of their own strengths and areas that need improvement • Monitoring their progress in developing skills and understanding • Recognizing stress and learning to identify its causes • Taking responsibility for their actions and for their learning <p>Adaptive, Coping, and Management Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using adaptive skills, such as being flexible, making connections, and applying problem-solving, stress-management, and conflict-resolution skills, when confronted with challenges and change • Using coping skills, such as relaxation techniques, adopting an optimistic attitude, trying out solutions to problems, expressing emotions, and seeking help, when dealing with difficult or stressful situations or emotions • Using time-management and organizational skills to develop greater control over their own lives 	<p>Communication Skills (verbal/non-verbal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving information – observing non-verbal signals and body language; active listening, including paraphrasing, clarifying, questioning, responding • Interpreting information – reflecting on messages, analysing messages • Sending information – signalling intentions; clearly expressing information and ideas; expressing responses and providing feedback; using persuasive skills, assertive skills, negotiating skills, refusal skills <p>Relationship and Social Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing respect for others and the environment • Appreciating differences in people • Demonstrating fair play • Demonstrating teamwork skills by working collaboratively with a partner or in a group to achieve a common goal • Applying conflict-resolution skills • Networking • Showing leadership 	<p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generating information/ideas • Organizing information/ideas • Focusing and clarifying ideas or strategies <p>Processing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpreting, making connections, analysing • Synthesizing • Evaluating <p>Drawing Conclusions/ Presenting Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arriving at a decision, conclusion, goal, or solution • Presenting results (e.g., orally, in writing, through a demonstration or performance) • Sharing the strategy <p>Reflecting/Evaluating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on what could have been done differently • Transferring learning to new situations • Planning next steps

- a) Did you learn anything new in taking this workshop that you can apply to your teaching practice? Describe something that really stood out for you?
- b) How comfortable were you with participating in the activities during the workshop? Were activities something new to you or something that you already think you incorporate? Explain.

- c) Did you feel there was anything missing from the workshop that is important when discussing this topic? Was there anything that you think should be removed?

Section 2: Ideas & Strategies to Integrate Living Skills

- a) Are there activities that you already use that you feel teach living skills components of the curriculum?
- b) Describe some ideas or strategies that you can share with other teachers to help integrate living skills into PE.

- c) What difficulties and/or success have you encounter in creating and/or finding activities the incorporate living skills?

Section 3: Your Supports in Living Skills Curriculum

- a) Are there any resources that you find useful in integrating living skills? If so, what resources do you use and how can they be accessible to other teachers?
- b) What support, for example at levels such as your school, board, community, and province, do you feel teachers need in order to integrate living skills in PE. Are there any issues that come to mind from your own experience and why?

Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Opening Remarks/Reminders:

- Thank participant for their participation and give a brief summary of what type of questions will be asked and how long approximately the interview will take (15min) Ensure that they have enough time to participate.
- Inform them that they can skip a question if they don't feel like they can answer it or feel uncomfortable.
- Remind participant that they will be audio recorded during the interview. At any time they have the option to stop the interview and recording. All audio recordings will be kept confidential and will only be accessed by the researcher.
- Ask if there are any questions before beginning.

Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Educators

1. Give a little bit of background on yourself as well as your role currently as a professional and how it relates to the health and physical education setting.
 - Educational Background (Degrees, Certifications)
 - Teaching Experience (Grade Levels, Board levels)
 - Positions Held
2. How do you integrate the living skills expectations into your classroom activities in health and physical education? What strategies do you to achieve this?
 - Types and Forms of Activities (etc. group work, games,)
 - Curriculum Resources and documents
2. What are the challenges you face in terms of implementing these living skills? In what way do you feel these challenges can be overcome?
 - Ongoing issues and problems
 - School setting; colleagues, admin, scheduling, resources
 - Class Environments: space available, student interactions
 - Teaching Perspective, Values, Philosophies
 - Current Knowledge and Understanding
3. Do you feel there are a benefits and/or limitations of integrating living skills through the Health & Physical Education Curriculum? What are they?
 - Enjoyment Fun
 - Student Development: cognitive, social, emotional
 - Life-Long Learning
4. What support have you received in implementing the revised H&PE curriculum? Have you received any support in understanding and integrating the living skills expectations?
 - Forms of support; Professional Development, Conferences, In-Service Sessions
 - Specific Groups: Board level, Ministry, School Admin and Principal, Community Organization, Consultants
5. How do you think your students perceive living skills? What living skills do you think the students you work with value?
 - Types of living skills; personal, interpersonal, critical and creative thinking
 - Students' definition of Living skills

Notes:

Appendix D: Reflective Interview Notes Template Example

Date:	Nov 2012	Time:	am/pm	Study:	Masters Thesis
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Descriptive Comments

Portraits of Subjects

- Male- Teacher candidate in Bachelor of Education program at a University
- Junior-Intermediate 4-10 Program
- Past-Education: Bachelor of Physical Education and Masters of Physical Education
- Extensive Knowledge of Life Skills through Thesis Project

Reconstruction of Private Conversations with Participants

- Participant came into room and we discussed the duration of the interview along with questions that would be discussed. Shared that in his placement he taught Grade 8 class and taught 7/8 Physical Education.

Descriptions of Physical Setting

Lab/Office setting: the participant and Myself sat in desk chairs in the office. The office is fairly small, but also quiet. The participant was familiar with the setting as they had been in the room before.

Accounts of Particular Events

- The idea of having to “legitimize” physical education. This use of vocabulary really stuck with me when it was said.

Depiction of Activities

- Semi-structured interview

Descriptions of Own Personal Behaviour

- I was fairly relaxed with the participant as I know them quite well. I didn’t speak much or interrupt as I wanted to let experience and ideas emerge based on their terms. As well, I wanted the participant to share as much information as possible.

Reflective Comments

Reflections on Analysis

-

Reflections on Methods

- Semi-structured Interview: I had changed the questions so that they were more reflective of a teacher candidate’s point of view. This was good because

the participant hadn't had a lot of placement time. However, he did draw out information related to his experiences from his post-secondary education, which helped put into perspective his prior knowledge. I felt that some of the questions were repetitive because he had already answered them prior to getting to the question. I asked them anyway just to make sure and confirm his experiences related to the question. I might change the questions to solely focusing on their experience, rather than speaking about what their associate teacher was doing or the resources available to them. This will keep the focus on them rather than a report on another.

Ethical Dilemmas & Conflicts

- The participant that I was interview I had known for almost 2 years. In this case, I made sure to tell him that he was not obligated to participate and that he could stop at anytime. He was very willing to participate and there were no conflicts having known him previously or having worked together before on other projects.

Reflections on Observer's Frame of Mind

- I came into this interview with a prior knowledge of the some of the experiences the participant has already with living skills and had an idea of what he would say. However I tried to keep an open mind so that I wouldn't make assumptions to what would be said, but also be ready to look and ask for questions that I would not expect. Even though I might have known certain events, or descriptions already I wanted to make sure that they were told and recorded in a way I would remember and they were documented.

Points of Clarification

- I think that the support question is a hard one for teacher candidates to answer because they are not in the teaching environment every day. Perhaps, focusing on what supports are specifically available to them will be a better question. This might focus on the teacher program in terms of disseminating information related to living skills. I think the disadvantages question still needs clarification. I try to ask this question to get the other side and see if living skills in HPE can be a negative thing. Perhaps I should something along the lines of (sometimes do living skills not work in the HPE setting? Why is this?)

Appendix E: Consent Form

Title of Study: Implementation of the Revised Elementary Health & Physical Education Curriculum Living Skills Expectations: A Case Study of Teachers' Experiences.

Principal Investigator: Dr. James Mandigo, Centre for Healthy Development
Brock University

Student-Investigators: Jillian Weir, Masters Candidate
Brock University

INVITATION

I, Dr. James Mandigo, from the Centre for Healthy Development at Brock University, invite you to participate in a research project entitled **"Implementation of the Revised Elementary Health & Physical Education Curriculum Living Skills Expectations: A Case Study of Teachers' Experiences."**

The following letter and consent form are to inform you of a study we wish for you to participate in. The purpose of this research project is to understand the experiences of teachers in the implementing the physical education curriculum and secondly, discover the values, attitudes and perceptions that teachers have in the integrating living skills into their classroom. It is anticipated that this type of research will help provide a better understanding of how teachers can effectively implement physical education expectations through various techniques and forms of support.

WHAT'S INVOLVED

Participation in this study will involve the following:

- Completion of a feedback reflection sheet that will take approximately 5-10 minutes. This will require you to answer questions related to your participation and learning in the living skills workshop as well as your insights about other issues and topics relate to the integration of living skills.
- Participation in a 15-30 minute telephone or in-person interview about the revised Health & Physical Education (HPE) Elementary Curriculum in which you had a role in developing. Questions will be related to the development, reasoning and objectives in the development process of the curriculum as well as questions related to the document content.
- These interviews will be conducted according to your availability and will be taped using a personal audio recording device and transcribed verbatim. As a participant you will have access to your interview at anytime.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to be in the study now but later change your mind, you can leave the study without penalty by advising the researchers. In this instance, we will ask if we can keep the data that you have already contributed to the study. If you would not like this, the data already collected will be destroyed. There is no obligation for you to answer any questions that you feel is invasive, offensive or inappropriate. At any point during the research process you may ask questions of the researchers.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISK

In participating in the study, you will be able to create a voice about your own experiences in developing curriculum and share the objective of introducing the new HPE curriculum to the education system. You will be able to give insights and directions to help the student investigator and other teachers participating a better understanding of the curriculum document itself and its goal and purpose in their practice.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information you provide will be kept confidential except as required by mandatory reporting laws. In rare cases, it will not be possible to ensure confidentiality because of mandatory reporting laws (e.g. suspected child abuse). Your name will not be included in any reports or associated with the data collected in the study. You will not be identified individually in any way in written reports of this research, however, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Interviews conducted in person, at the university, at work or personal residence will be done in private with only the researcher to ensure confidentiality. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any point that you wish.

We will keep the information we collect in this study in a safe place. It will be stored in a lockable filing cabinet in the researcher's office at Brock University. Electronic files will be stored in a password-protected

folder on the researcher's computer. We will keep the information until December 31st, 2015 (3years) and then it will be destroyed. Access to this data will be restricted to Jillian Weir (Student Investigator) and her supervisor, Dr. James Mandigo.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

Results of this study will likely be written into papers that appear in professional journals, presentations at conferences and in a summary report that will be made available to the school board and participants within the study. We will have a written report of the study findings by Sept 2013. If you would like a copy of the results, please contact Dr. James Mandigo by phone or email.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE

If you have any questions about this study or would like more information, please contact the Principal Investigator or Research Collaborator using the contact information written above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University (#11-248). If you have any comments or concerns about your child's rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 688-5550 Ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca.

Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form.

Dr. James Mandigo
Principal Investigator
Email: jmandigo@brocku.ca

Jillian Weir
Student Investigator
Email: jw06xa@brocku.ca

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CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION

I agree to participate in the following part(s) of the study described above.

- a) Workshop Feedback Reflection Sheet ☐ Yes ☐ No
b) Follow-Up Interview ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered yes to participating in a follow-up interview, please provide your contact information and a suitable time and method in which we can reach you. Also indicate whether you would prefer to have an in person interview or telephone interview.

Phone: _____ Best Time To Call: Morning ____ Afternoon ____
Email: _____ Evening ____

Interview Preference: (Check all that apply) ☐ Telephone Interview ☐ In-Person Interview

I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____